

Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768)

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Hermann Samuel Reimarus

(1694–1768)

Classicism, Hebraist, Enlightenment Radical in Disguise

By

Ulrich Groetsch



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Cover illustration and frontispiece: Portrait of Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) by Gerloff Hiddinga, 1749. Private collection. Photo by Sascha Fuis, Cologne 2004. Courtesy of Hinrich Sieveking, Munich.

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

To Karl and Anne Morrison

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In angustiis amici apparent.
PETRONIUS, *Satyricon* 61

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Acknowledgments

In his poem *Ithaca*, Constantine Cavafy encourages his readers to wish for a long journey, with many summer mornings, full of adventures and pleasures. Looking back, the journey completing this book was, by my own standards, everything I could have hoped for and seeing Ithaca itself seems just as anticlimactic as Cavafy warned his readers it might be. Admittedly, I did meet some Laestrygonians and Cyclopes along the way, but the riches I accumulated far outweigh these unpleasant encounters.¹

The journey began as a humble dissertation at Rutgers University where I met Donald R. Kelley, my first dissertation advisor, who was tremendously helpful in fostering the idea for this project. He put me in touch with scholars and savants who undoubtedly know more about several aspects of this field than I probably ever will. On numerous occasions, both Tony Grafton and Jonathan Israel have been generous with their time and support. While the radiant light of their scholarly accomplishments speaks for itself, their kindness makes them extraordinary ambassadors of humanity in the academic world. Don Kelley also put me in touch with Martin Mulsow, who would take over as my advisor shortly after Don's retirement. Martin has been a source of inspiration ever since. He has been instrumental in helping me shape this project and he has been a dear friend whenever I needed one. I am most grateful to him for his friendship, inspiration, and sense of humor—I genuinely miss our excursions to the Met! I also would like to take this opportunity to apologize to Karin, Theresa, Nicola, and Jonathan for having taken up their family time with my queries. I am most thankful for their generosity and for the many times they have welcomed me to their home.

While I was at Rutgers University, I was able to benefit from the advice of an outstanding group of scholars and friends in the Tri-State Area, especially Elisheva Carlebach, Lowell Edmunds, Elizabeth Hyde, Robin Ladrach, Stefan Schorn (now Catholic University in Leuven), Nancy Sinkoff, Cornelia Wilhelm (now Emory), and Azzan Yadin. Gary Rendsburg, who had then only recently moved from Cornell to Rutgers, spent his first summer in New Jersey going with me over the intricacies of the book of Job. I am tremendously grateful for his time and his willingness to join my dissertation committee at that stage of my journey.

¹ Constantine P. Cavafy, *The Complete Poems of Cavafy*, trans. Rae Dalven and intr. W.H. Auden (San Diego, 1976), 36.

On several occasions I was able to present parts of this work to an academic audience, which helped me rethink some of the questions I tried to answer. A Reimarus conference in 2006 at Rutgers University and the conference “Cultural Crossovers: The Bible and the Profane,” also held at Rutgers in 2007, provided a welcome platform to discuss aspects of my work to an outstanding group of scholars from a number of disciplines related to my own. I would like to mention specifically Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann and Dietrich Klein, whose earlier scholarship on Reimarus opened up new avenues for my own project. Constantin Fasolt made it possible for me to present my work at the early modern workshop at the University of Chicago. To him and the participants I am much indebted for many useful comments and suggestions. A post-doctoral fellowship at the Gotha Research Centre of Erfurt University provided me with world-class resources and fantastic conditions to rework parts of my manuscript. While at Erfurt I also had the pleasure of working with Asaph Ben-Tov, Andrew McKenzie-McHarg, and Guido Naschert, who have become more than just academic colleagues. Their company once again proved to me that lively scholarly discourse does not eliminate opportunities to discuss film, fishing, food, gossip, literature, music, politics, soccer, or travel. Christoph Bultmann of the Martin Luther Institute at the University of Erfurt warmly welcomed me upon my arrival. I am grateful for his willingness to discuss my project with me and help clarify some of the theological implications of Reimarus’s work.

While I was working on this project, I was fortunate to draw on the resources and help of a number of exquisite institutions and individuals, without which the completion of this project on this side of the Atlantic would have been virtually impossible. I would like to thank especially Kenneth Henke and Kate Skrebutenas at Princeton Theological Seminary for making my trips to Princeton so rewarding, the staff at Rutgers University Library, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Collier Library at the University of North Alabama, Gardner A. Sage Library of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, New York Public Library, the Firestone Library at Princeton University, Columbia University Library, and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University. During my stay at Nashotah House Theological Seminary, David Sherwood, director of the Frances Donaldson Library—some of us would call it endearingly “Sherwood’s Forest”—granted me generous access to the institution’s resources. I am grateful for his generosity and his friendship. A research grant at my current institution, the University of North Alabama, allowed me to thoroughly rework the finished book manuscript throughout the summer break. I am grateful to Sharon Herson for her willingness to take on this project and for her tireless efforts to render this work more readable. Leon Wash (Chicago) and Charles Loder (Rutgers) graciously took

on the tedious task of checking my translations. I am tremendously grateful to them for doing this on such a short notice. My new colleagues at the University of North Alabama have been supportive from the moment of my arrival in Florence. I would like to thank in particular Martha Frances Graham for her unwavering administrative support and sense of humor; Chris Maynard, the department chair and now associate dean, whose advice I greatly cherish and who always had an open ear for the needs of new faculty members; Leigh Thompson who, on more than one occasion, saved the day.

Naturally, many of my resources came from libraries overseas. When I began my project, digitization was still in its infancy and frequent trips to Europe on a graduate student budget were financially not feasible. I am deeply grateful to the staff at the Bavarian State Library in Munich, the Fondazione Querini-Stampalia in Venice, the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, the Goethe-Museum in Frankfurt, the Hamburg State Archive, the Herzog-August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Leiden University Library, the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Göttingen, the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky, the Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek in Jena, the Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek Erfurt/Gotha, the Royal Library in Copenhagen, the University Library of Erlangen-Nürnberg, the University Library in Rostock, and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana for answering my queries and requests for reproductions. I would like to convey my deepest gratitude to Ennio Ferraglio, the director of the Biblioteca Queriniana, who not only brought the exchange between Cardinal Querini and Reimarus to my attention, but was instrumental in acquiring copies and reproduction of the exchange. Without his help and support much of this project would not have been possible. Hinrich Sieveking, a direct descendant of the Reimarus family and responsible archivist of the family archive on deposit at the Hamburg State Archive, granted me access to his family's papers and provided me with reproductions of portraits still in possession of his family. I would like to thank Almut Spalding not only for facilitating contact between Hinrich Sieveking and myself, but for her willingness to share her vast knowledge of the Reimarus family history and for important pointers and leads. On my research trips to Hamburg, I was warmly welcomed by Hans-Walter Stork and the staff at the University Library, and Eva Horváth and Jürgen Stenzel kindly invited me to their home. At the University of Hamburg, I benefitted greatly from conversations with Dirk Brietzke, Franklin Kopitzsch, and Johann Anselm Steiger. Erik Petersen, whose deft scholarship on Fabricius remains a milestone in the field, made many of the manuscripts at the Royal Library in Copenhagen available to me. Heike Tröger from the Department of Rare

Books and Special Collections at the University of Rostock, always promptly responded to my requests for reproductions, and Konrad Heumann, director of the manuscript and rare books division of the Goethe-House in Frankfurt, swiftly responded to my request for a reproduction of a Reimarus manuscript. Justin Michael of Philip Warner Archive Services provided excellent support to generate the proper format for my illustrations. I am grateful to him and his staff for their time and service. An earlier version of chapter 6 has been published under the same title in *Lessings Religionsphilosophie im Kontext: Hamburger Fragmente und Wolfenbütteler Axiomata*. Edited by Christoph Bultmann and Friedrich Vollhardt. New York: De Gruyter, 2011: 181–99. A somewhat different version of chapter 4 appeared in *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Martin Mulsow (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 103–57. All images and illustrations are printed with the kind permission of their holders.

I would not have arrived in Ithaca without the continuous support of family and friends. A lovely year at Nashotah House Theological Seminary provided a much-needed contrast to the merciless pace of central New Jersey and Chicago. It turned out to be the perfect place to recharge and to revise parts of this work. I am grateful to Fr. Billy Daniel and his family for opening their home to me and for their friendship. My parents and my brother frequently provided financial and logistic support when resources on this side of the Atlantic ran dry. My wife Laura made great sacrifices to join me in my academic quest. I am hoping that I am at least partly successful in making these sacrifices worthwhile. The least I can do is promise that I will never stop trying. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude and deep appreciation to Karl and Anne Morrison, to whom I would like to dedicate this book. They have been with me on this journey from the beginning and have witnessed, endured, suffered, and rejoiced with me on so many occasions. Given these circumstances, I am glad that I took Cavafy's words at heart and did not rush the journey.²

Ulrich Groetsch

Florence, AL, February 2015

² Ibid., 37.

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Note to the Reader and List of Abbreviations

Note to the Reader

Translations from French, German, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin are by the author unless indicated otherwise.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	<i>Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie</i> , 56 vols. (Leipzig, 1875–1912)
b	Babylonian Talmud (Bavli)
BBQ	<i>Brescia, Biblioteca Queriniana</i>
BPL	<i>Bibliothecae Publicae Latini</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
NDB	<i>Neue Deutsche Biographie</i> , vols. 1–24 (Berlin, 1953–)
NL Reimarus	<i>Nachlass Reimarus</i>
R.	<i>Rabbi</i>
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> . Edited by Hans Dieter Betz et al. 4th. edition. 8 vols. (Tübingen, 1998–2007)
Sanh	Tractate Sanhedrin
StA HH	<i>Staatsarchiv, Hansestadt Hamburg</i>
Sup. ep.	<i>Supellex epistolica Uffenbachii et Wolfiorum</i>
SUB HH	<i>Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg</i>
LA	<i>Literaturarchiv</i>
VQS	<i>Venice, Fondazione Querini Stampalia</i>

Introduction

In 1774, the renowned German writer, literary critic, and dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), then chief librarian of the ducal library in Wolfenbüttel, was at the peak of his career. Lessing's works had already been widely distributed throughout Germany. Works such as his *Minna von Barnhelm* (1767) were acclaimed as among the finest plays in Europe, and his *Laokoön: Oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* [Laocoön; or, The Limits of Painting and Poetry (1766)] became one of the most influential works of literary and artistic theory.¹ When Lessing accepted the position as chief librarian, the duke of Brunswick granted him exemption from censorship. This was unprecedented and testified to Lessing's prestige as a literary and intellectual figure. The privilege rested on the premise that Lessing would not abuse it and would not write anything contrary to the Christian faith. Apart from those caveats, the duke allowed Lessing to edit and publish a number of books from the ducal library. From 1774 on, Lessing initiated the literary series *Zur Geschichte und Literatur. Aus den Schätzen der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel* [On History and Literature. From the Treasures of the Ducal Library of Wolfenbüttel], in which he published numerous precious manuscripts that had till then remained hidden from the public eye. These conditions seemed more than ideal and were a perfect remedy to compensate for the loneliness and isolation of a position in the small duchy of Wolfenbüttel.

This idyll, however, lasted only briefly. In 1774, Lessing began publishing a number of "printed treasures" from the extraordinary collection at the ducal library. Starting with the essay *Über die Duldung der Deisten* [On Tolerating Deists], Lessing published a number of fragments from a larger corpus, which he claimed to have found among the treasures of the ducal library. The public response to this work remained reasonably restrained, which seemed to surprise him, since he had been discouraged from publishing the work by friends like Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) and Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803).² Only after the additional fragments—*Von der Verschreyung der Vernunft von den Kanzeln* [About the Decrying of Reason from the Pulpit],

¹ David Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoön: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (New York, 1984).

² Even after the publication of the following fragments, reactions from the orthodoxy took considerable time; in this connection, Lessing wrote to his brother Karl: "That the theologians remain silent with regard to the publication of the fragments confirms the opinion I have been cultivating about them. With a certain degree of care, you are able to write whatever

Unmöglichkeit einer Offenbarung, die alle Menschen auf eine gegründete Art glauben könnten [On the Impossibility of a Revelation, Which Could Be Faithfully Believed by All Human Beings], *Durchgang der Israeliten durchs Rothe Meer* [Passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea], *Daß die Bücher des Alten Testaments nicht geschrieben worden, eine Religion zu offenbaren* [That the Books of the Old Testament Were Not Written to Reveal a Religion], and *Über die Auferstehungsgeschichte* [About the Resurrection Story]—were released in January 1777 did a storm of outrage within the orthodox community break loose. The notorious *Fragmentenstreit* [Fragment Controversy] sent shockwaves through Germany and became one of the most important public debates of the Enlightenment. Theologians like Johann Daniel Schumann (1714–1787), the director of the lyceum in Hannover, embarked on a fervent campaign against the anonymous author of the fragments and their well-known editor Lessing,³ and major theological figures of the period, such as Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791)⁴ and Johann Melchior Goeze (1717–1786),⁵ followed suit.⁶ Although Lessing had made it clear that he did not share the anonymous author's point of view, Goeze, chief pastor at the church of Saint Catherine in Hamburg, fiercely attacked Lessing personally, and the entire episode turned into a major dispute between the two figures. How serious matters were and how threatening the fragments' contents appeared become evident by simply looking at the titles of the responses. Georg Christoph Silberschlag (1731–1790), a Lutheran preacher in Berlin, titled his response *Antibarbarus oder Verteidigung der Christlichen Religion und des Verfahrens des Evangelischen Lehramts im Religionsunterrichte gegen und wider die Einwürfe neuerer Zeiten* [Antibarbarus or Defense of the Christian Religion and the Lutheran Teachings as Presented for the Purpose

you wish"; see letter to Karl Lessing, 25 May 1777, letter no. 1293. *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: Werke und Briefe*, ed. Wilfried Barner et al., 14 vols. (Frankfurt, 1985–2003), vol. 12 (1994), 79.

³ See William Boehart, *Politik und Religion. Studien zum Fragmentenstreit* (Reimarus, Goeze, Lessing) (Schwarzenbek, 1988), 376–77.

⁴ Gottfried Hornig, *Johann Salomo Semler: Studien zu Leben und Werk des Hallenser Aufklärungstheologen* (Tübingen, 1996); also Eric Carlsson, "Johann Salomo Semler, the German Enlightenment, and Protestant Theology's Historical Turn" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2006).

⁵ Hans Höhne, *Johan Melchior Goeze: Stationen einer Streiterkarriere* (Münster, 2004); Ernst-Peter Wieckenberg, *Johan Melchior Goeze* (Hamburg, 2007); on Goeze's activity as a collector of Bibles and as a scholar, see Ernst-Peter Wieckenberg, "Johann Melchior Goeze als Sammler, Philologe und Leser," in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger and Sandra Richter (Berlin, 2012), 173–90.

⁶ Gerhard Freund, *Theologie im Widerspruch: Die Lessing-Goeze-Kontroverse* (Stuttgart, 1989).

of Religious Instruction against Most Recent Objections];⁷ and Johann Salomo Semler commented in the preface to his response:

The initial response [to the publication] was some kind of disbelief [...]; numerous seriously contemplative young men who had committed themselves to the teachings of the Christian religion found themselves in a position of great insecurity, since the foundations of their own beliefs had been severely shaken; some men then decided to follow a different professional calling and not to dwell in increasing uncertainty [...].⁸

This uncertainty was partly based on the fragments' extremely powerful arguments, which some believed could never be refuted.⁹ Clearly, Christianity appeared to be under siege and could be rescued only by a concerted effort of the pious forces in the country!

Seeing the battle escalate, the duke of Brunswick felt compelled to intervene, and he removed Lessing's censorship privileges. Forced to silence, at least in theological matters, Lessing wrote one of his most acclaimed works, *Nathan the Wise*, which in essence stresses the idea that key moral values are cherished in all three main monotheistic religions. *Nathan the Wise* serves as one of the most significant works that fully advocates the Enlightenment ideals of religious tolerance, dialogue, and humanitarianism. With the publication of *Nathan the Wise*, the controversy between Lessing and Goeze ended, but it did not solve the theological disputes the controversy had unleashed. One hundred years later, in 1881, the centennial anniversary of Lessing's death, a debate arose among members of the memorial council of Hamburg about whether

⁷ See Georg Christoph Silberschlag, "Antibarbarus oder Verteidigung der Christlichen Religion und des Verfahrens des Evangelischen Lehramts im Religionsunterrichte gegen und wider die Einwürfe neuerer Zeiten," in *Lessing: Werke und Briefe*, ed. Barner et al., vol. 8, 605–7.

⁸ "Eine Art von Erstaunen war der erste Erfolg [...]; manche denkende ernsthafte Jünglinge, die sich ebenfalls diesem Lehramt, zum fernern Vortheil der christlichen Religion bisher gewidmet hatten, fanden sich in grosser Verlegenheit, wegen ihrer eigenen so erschütterten Ueberzeugung; manche entschlossen sich, lieber eine andre Bestimmung ihrer künftigen Lebensart zu ergreifen, als so lange in wachsender Ungewisheit [...] zu beharren." See Johann Salomo Semler, *Beantwortung der Fragmente eines Ungeannten insbesondere Vom Zwecke Jesu und seiner Jünger* (Halle, 1779), a3.

⁹ Ibid., a4: "In mancher Stadt gab es Leser, welche gerade heraus sagten, diese Fragmente können nicht widerlegt werden [...]."

the fragmentist's name should be included in a commemorative plaque on a newly created Lessing memorial.¹⁰

But who was this notorious fragmentist, whom Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1753–1827) called the “giant, who had thus far been incarcerated in the library of Wolfenbüttel” and who had “preached only secretly against the Christian faith”?¹¹ The fragments were part of a larger work, entitled *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die Vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* [Apology or Defense for the Reasonable Worshipers of God].¹² Its author, Hermann Samuel Reimarus, was a distinguished professor of Oriental languages at the prestigious *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg. His radical work made him the most significant biblical critic in Germany, and for that reason alone, he should undoubtedly be numbered among the most eminent philosophers of the Enlightenment. Unfortunately, he has continued to lead an existence of relative obscurity, often only briefly illuminated by Lessing scholars, who generally mention his name as the author of the notorious fragments. My work seeks to reestablish this neglected figure of the German Enlightenment in his own right and rescue him from the hybrid existence of relative obscurity and Lessing scholarship.

Reimarus grew up surrounded by academic and theological influences. His father, Nicolaus Reimarus (1663–1724),¹³ worked as a teacher at the renowned *Johanneum*,¹⁴ the local Latin school, which had been established in 1528 by the famous reformer Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558).¹⁵ Much of primary

¹⁰ Franklin Kopitzsch, “Hermann Samuel Reimarus als Gelehrter und Aufklärer in Hamburg,” in *Hermann Samuel Reimarus, 1694–1786. Beiträge zur Reimarus-Renaissance in der Gegenwart*, ed. Wolfgang Walter (Göttingen, 1998), 21.

¹¹ “Der Riese, welcher in die Wolfenbütteler Bibliothek bisher eingekerkert war, und nur im Verborgenen gegen den Glauben der Christen predigte, ist nun öffentlich erschienen”; see Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, review of *Uebrige noch ungedruckte Werke des wolfenbüttelschen Fragmentisten. Ein Nachlaß von Gotthold Ephraim Lessing*, ed. C.A.E. Schmidt, in *Allgemeine Bibliothek der biblischen Literatur* 1 (1787), 3.

¹² Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, ed. Gerhard Alexander, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1972).

¹³ See “Nikolaus Reimarus,” in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Hans Schröder, vol. 6 (Hamburg, 1873), no. 3131.

¹⁴ On the *Johanneum* in general, see Edmund Kelter, *Hamburg und sein Johanneum im Wandel der Jahrhunderte, 1529–1929* (Hamburg, 1929); still useful is Ernst Philipp Ludwig Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums zu Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1829).

¹⁵ See Karl August Traugott Vogt, *Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften* (Elberfeld, 1867); more recently, Traugott Koch, “Der Ehrbaren Stadt Hamburg Christliche Ordnung’ durch Johannes Bugenhagen (1529),” in *500 Jahre Theologie in Hamburg: Hamburg als Zentrum christlicher Theologie und Kultur zwischen Tradition und Zukunft*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger (New York, 2005), 1–15; more specifically, Kurt

education, however, often still occurred at home under the guidance of parents, ministers, more advanced students, and tutors of different kinds.¹⁶ Before Reimarus entered the *Johanneum*, he most likely had already received instruction in Latin and Greek at home.¹⁷ At the *Johanneum*, his father remained the youth's first teacher for probably four to six years, until 1708, when he was admitted to the highest grade, the *prima*.¹⁸ At that time, the famous humanist and bibliographer Johann Albert Fabricius (1668–1736)¹⁹ was serving as interim principal of the *Johanneum*.²⁰ Since it was customary for the principal to be in charge of the *prima*, Fabricius became Reimarus's main teacher from 1708 to 1710. Reimarus must have been exceptionally gifted because he soon drew the attention of Fabricius, who would become his lifelong mentor. It is hard to overestimate the influence of the famous man of letters on the young student. At a time when access to books and scholarship was not automatically a given, becoming the protégé of a famous man of letters who was well known and admired throughout the world of learning and whose library rivalled that of many universities certainly opened doors.²¹ So it was not insignificant that Reimarus remained Fabricius's student after his teacher moved back to his permanent position at the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg. Instituted in 1613,²² the *Gymnasium* was above all intended to facilitate a student's transition from

Karl Hendel, "Johannes Bugenhagen's Educational Contributions" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1974), as well as Hans Oppermann, *Die hamburgische Schulordnung Bugenhagens* (Hamburg, 1966).

¹⁶ See, for example, Johann Georg Büsch, *Erfahrungen*, vol. 4: *Ueber den Gang meines Geistes und meiner Thätigkeit* (Hamburg, 1794), 4: "Privatlehrer, denen man doch damals auch schon weniger, als den öffentlichen, einräumte, konnten sich doch lange in ihrem Platze behaupten [...]."

¹⁷ "Hunc ego non modo Patrem habui providentissimum, indulgentissimum, sed et moderatorum meae pueritiae, et, quod paucis contingit simul, bonarum literarum praeceptorem, qui mihi ipsem prima pietatis et virtutis semina iniiceret, et latinae graecaeque linguarum et humanitatis omnis amorem in animo tenero accenderet"; quoted in Johann Georg Büsch, *Memoriae immortali Hermanni Samuelis Reimari* (Hamburg, 1769), 7.

¹⁸ Werner Puttfarken, ed., *Album Johannei*, vol. 1: *Einleitung. Schülerverzeichnis, 1529–1732* (Hamburg, 1929), 58, no. 836.

¹⁹ See Erik Petersen, *Johann Albert Fabricius: en Humanist i Europa*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1998).

²⁰ Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, 194–211.

²¹ See Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995), 12–21.

²² See Johann Klefeker, *Sammlung der Hamburgischen Gesetze und Verfassungen* [...], vol. 6: *Der Sechste Theil in welchem die Verfassung des Gymnasii und Johannei und der öffentlichen Stadt-Bibliothek [...] enthalten sind* (Hamburg, 1768), 45: "Das Jahr 1613 ist das eigentliche

the dread and drill of the *Johanneum* to the lofty spheres of higher learning.²³ Although the *Gymnasium illustre* was by law not permitted to grant any degree, its stellar faculty and exceptional level of instruction compensated for its relatively small size. Besides taking courses with Fabricius, Reimarus encountered another giant of scholarship there, the still young, but soon-to-be famous Hebraist, Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739).²⁴ Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebraea*²⁵ complemented Fabricius's *Bibliotheca Graeca*²⁶ and became the standard bibliography of Hebraica in the field for at least a century. With the support of both Fabricius and Wolf under his belt, Reimarus was well prepared to enter the world of learning and scholarship. The *Gymnasium* provided Reimarus with the propaedeutic foundations for the study of theology, philosophy, and Oriental languages at the university, and during his first year at the University of Jena, in 1714, he scoffed at what seemed to him the clumsy approaches of his fellow students.²⁷ At Jena, Reimarus studied theology under Johann Franz

Stiftungsjahr des Hamburgischen Gymnasii, und der 12te August desselben Jahrs ist der Tag, an welchem dasselbe öffentlich und feyerlich eingeweiht worden ist.”

²³ The illustrious Petrus Lambecius, one-time headmaster of the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg, explains the purpose of the *Gymnasium* as follows: “Scholae enim triviales Gymnasiorum, & Gymnasia Academiarum seminaria sunt, adeoque arcta inter haec Collegia est cognatio, ut a salute scholarum trivialium salus Gymnasiorum, & a Gymnasiorum salute salus dependeat Academiarum. Quippe in scholis prima jaciuntur eruditionis fundamenta, in Gymnasiis ad aedificium, positis jam fundamentis superstruendum, materia convehitur & contignatur, in Academiis ultima accedit manus & fastigium operi imponitur. Quare si in scholis non ponatur solidum fundamentum, nec in Gymnasiis idonea convehatur materia & probe contignetur, totum, quod in Academiis absolvitur, aedificium infirmum est & ruinae obnoxium”; in Petrus Lambecius, *Orationes et programmata* (Hamburg, 1711), 90.

²⁴ See Johann Heinrich von Seelen, *Vita, scriptis et meritis in Rempublicam Literariam Viri [...] Ioan. Christoph. Wolfii [...]* (Stade, 1717); Martin Mulsow, “Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739) und die verbotenen Bücher in Hamburg,” in *500 Jahre Theologie in Hamburg*, ed. Steiger, 81–111; “Johann Christoph Wolf,” in *Lexikon der Hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, ed. Hans Schröder, vol. 8 (1888), 143–48; recently also Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, “Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739) und die Kabbala,” in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion*, ed. Steiger and Richter, 209–25.

²⁵ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea sive notitia tum auctorum Hebraeorum*, 4 vols. (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1715–33).

²⁶ Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Graeca sive notitia scriptorum veterum Graecorum*, 14 vols. (Hamburg, 1705–28).

²⁷ Letter Reimarus to Johann Christoph Wolf, 16 June 1714, SUB HH, Sup. ep. 119, fols. 417v–418r: “Ceteri vero plerique omnes nil agunt aliud, quam ut ea, quae charta in papyrus descriptsere ipsi, dictitent in calatum l[ingua] Latina Buddei verba, germanicis iisque amplioribusque reddere conentur, cuius quidem rei non ipsorum imperitia, sed

Buddeus (1667–1729). With the exception of Christian Thomasius (1655–1728),²⁸ Buddeus was then considered the most respected representative of philosophical eclecticism, and he left a huge impression on Reimarus.²⁹ In 1716, after four semesters at Jena and with the help of recommendations from Wolf, Reimarus served briefly as lecturer at the University of Wittenberg. It seems doubtful, however, that Reimarus was ultimately interested in a teaching position at a university. Although he quickly became *magister legens* and distinguished himself with the postdoctoral thesis *De Machiavellismo ante Machiavellum* as an expert in the history of philosophy,³⁰ Reimarus seems to have played with the idea of following in the footsteps of his teachers Fabricius and Wolf, obtaining a position at the *Gymnasium illustre* while he was still very young.

summa ignorantia plerumque dissentium et incredibilis stupor causa est. Hi enim ultra prima Grammatices et pietatis elementa vix quicquam progressi, e Vicinia huc advolant, mox, ubi summa capita Doctrinarum, ut canes Nilum, degustaverint, rursus abituri [...]. Multa mihi promisseram de Bibliotheca hac Jenensi, et est profecto satis magno librorum apparatu instructa, sed quoniam disjecta sunt omnia atque inter se permixta, paucis huc usque usui esse potuit [...].”

- 28 On Thomasius, see Peter Schröder, *Christian Thomasius zur Einführung* (Hamburg, 1999); also Thomas Ahnert, *Religion and the Origins of the German Enlightenment: Faith and the Reform of Learning in the Thought of Christian Thomasius* (Rochester, N.Y., 2006).
- 29 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *De optima ratione discendi docendique elementa linguae latinae*, in *Kleine gelehrte Schriften. Vorstufen zur Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Göttingen, 1994), 13 [cited below as Schmidt-Biggemann, *Vorstufen*].
- 30 Dietrich Klein has pointed out that the treatise may have prepared Reimarus well for his criticism of Moses in the *Apologie* because of Machiavelli's functionalist view of religion. Reimarus's teacher Buddeus, for instance, put Machiavelli into a line of atheist thinkers that included Pietro Aretino, Poggio Bracciolini, Giordano Bruno, Pietro Pomponazzi, Giulio Cesare Vanini, Gerolamo Cardano, and Thomas Campanella. See Johann Franz Buddeus, *Theses theologicae de atheismo et superstitione variis observationibus illustratae* [...] (Jena, 1717), 109–10: “Cum bonae literae, quae hactenus densa velut caligine oppressae iacerant, iterum efflorescerent, ut veterum simul philosophorum, cumprimis Aristotelis, scita resuscitarentur, sentiendi hinc orta libertas apud multos in licentiam degeneravit, magnamque in Italia cumprimis impiorum hominum produxit cohortem, quorum alii pro atheis habiti, aut talia, quae ad atheismum ducunt, docuisse crediti sunt, alii autem lascivis, impuris atque profanis scriptis, sermonibus, moribus, ipsaque adeo vita, nullam numinis, si vers sunt, quae de iis narrantur, se habuisse rationem, testati sunt. Ad priorem classem PETRUM ARETINUM, FRANCISCUM POGGIUM, Florentinum, IORDANUS BRUNUM, PETRUM POMPONATIUM, IULIUM CAESAREM VANINUM, HIERONYMUM CARDANUM, THOMAM CAMPANELLAM, NICOLAUM MACHIAVELLUM [...].” See Dietrich Klein, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768). Das theologische Werk* (Tübingen, 2011), 23–32.

He continued to pursue his philological interests. In 1720–21, he traveled to Holland and England, with extensive visits to the libraries of Leiden and Oxford.³¹ An edition of Plethon's *Libellus de fato*, which was published in Leiden in 1721, was the result of his philological pursuits.³² Within two years, in July 1723, Reimarus accepted the headmastership at the Grosse Stadtschule in Wismar [Great City School of Wismar], which was then under Swedish jurisdiction.³³ The somewhat arrogant and elusive headmaster, however, faced strong opposition from the faculty so that his Wismar years were certainly not among his happiest.³⁴ It is not surprising, then, that Reimarus could hardly wait to return to Hamburg, and he constantly pestered both Fabricius and Wolf to keep their protégé in mind.³⁵ Finally, in the summer of 1728, the wait was over, and Reimarus joined his mentor Fabricius on the faculty of his alma mater, where he became professor of Hebrew and Oriental languages.³⁶ In addition, his bonds to Fabricius were strengthened privately. In November 1728, he married Fabricius's daughter Johanna Friederica (1707–1783), with whom he had seven children, although only two survived into adulthood. His position at the *Gymnasium* required him to teach introductory courses in Hebrew and Aramaic, Jewish antiquities, and biblical exegesis. At the same time, he

³¹ Jürgen Overhoff, "Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) und Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724–1790)—ein Lehrer und ein Schüler am Hamburger Akademischen Gymnasium," in *Das Akademische Gymnasium: Bildung und Wissenschaft in Hamburg, 1613–1883*, ed. Dirk Brietzke et al. (Berlin and Hamburg, 2013), 96.

³² Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Plethonis libellus de fato ejusdemque et Bessarionis Cardinalis epistolae amoebaeae de eodem argumento* [...] (Leiden, 1722).

³³ Rudolf Kleiminger, *Die Geschichte der grossen Stadtschule zu Wismar von 1541 bis 1945: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Schulwesens in Mecklenburg und zur Stadtgeschichte Wismars*, ed. Joachim Grehn (Kiel, 1991).

³⁴ Schmidt-Biggemann, *Vorstufen*, 25–26.

³⁵ See letter Reimarus to Johann Christoph Wolf, Wismar, 11 December 1724, SUB HH Sup. ep. 119, fols. 417v–418r: "Cum non dubitarem, quin Clarissimus Frater Tuus, pro iis, quae habet in omni literatura cum nomine meritis, jure quidem suo et petiturus sit, et ut omnino optoque accepturus, honores, quos ex B.D. Mulleri obitu ad alium deferendos nosti, constitueram initio, prorsus quiescere, atque vel suspicionem omnem ambitionis silentio meo amoliri. Verum existimarunt nonnulli, qui meis rationibus forte alio loco consultum cupiunt, me venturum in contrariam suspicionem neglectus ac contemptus Patriae, atque effecerunt, ut praesenti petitione memoriam mei ab oblivione liberandam, atque in reliquum tempus aditum ad Patriam parandum ducerem. Cujus quidem facti veniam abs Te, Vir Summe Reverende, peterem, nisi vererer, ne ita animo Tuo magno excuso que viderer aliquid detrahere, quo facile patieris, me, Tui certe studiosissimum, sine ullo Tui Tuorumque detrimento, futura cogitare commoda."

³⁶ Schmidt-Biggemann, *Vorstufen*, 33.

remained an active scholar, publishing the Job commentary of Johann Adolf Hoffmann (1676–1731),³⁷ who had been a friend of Reimarus's father-in-law Fabricius.³⁸ In 1751 and 1752, Reimarus completed his seminal edition of the *Historiae romanae* by the Greek historian Cassius Dio (155–235 C.E.),³⁹ which Fabricius had already begun, and in 1754, he finished his *Abhandlungen von den vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion* [Treatises on the Principal Truths of Natural Religion],⁴⁰ followed by his *Die Vernunftlehre* [Doctrine of Reason] in 1756⁴¹ and his pioneering *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere* [General Observations about the Drives of Animals] in 1760.⁴² By the time of his death in 1768, Reimarus was a celebrated and esteemed citizen of his native Hamburg. His work was recognized throughout the Republic of Letters by such honors as his admission to the Petersburg Academy of Sciences in 1761.⁴³ At the time of his death, he was praised as a great scholar and defender

37 "Johann Adolph Hofmann," in *Zedlers Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 13 (Halle, 1741), 450.

38 See Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Erbauliche versus rationale Hermeneutik. Hermann Samuel Reimarus' Bearbeitung von Johann Adolf Hoffmann's 'Neue Erklärung des Buches Hiob,'" in *Hermann Samuel Reimarus, 1694–1786. Beiträge zur Reimarus-Renaissance in der Gegenwart*, ed. Wolfgang Walter (Göttingen, 1998), 27–33.

39 *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae quae supersunt*, 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1750–52); see Ulrich Groetsch, "Reimarus, the Cardinal, and the Remaking of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*," in *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Martin Mulsow (Leiden, 2011), 103–57.

40 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion* (Hamburg, 1754); see Klein, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, 201–66.

41 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Die Vernunftlehre als eine Anweisung zum richtigen Gebrauche der Vernunft* (Hamburg, 1756); see also Hans Werner Arndt, "Die Logik von Reimarus im Verhältnis zum Rationalismus der Aufklärungsphilosophie," in *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Studien zur 'Vernunftlehre' von Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Wolfgang Walter and Ludwig Borinski (Göttingen, 1980), 59–74; Frieder Lötzsch, *Was ist 'Ökologie'? Hermann Samuel Reimarus. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne, 1987).

42 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere, hauptsächlich über ihre Kunstrtriebe* (Hamburg, 1760); Julian Jaynes and William Woodward, "In the Shadow of the Enlightenment: I. Reimarus against the Epicureans" and "In the Shadow of the Enlightenment: II. Reimarus and His Theory of Drives," in *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 10, no. 1 (1974), 3–15 and no. 2 (1974), 144–59, respectively.

43 Carl Mönckeberg, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und Johann Christian Edelmann* (Hamburg, 1867), 125.

of Christian faith, who used his wisdom and learning to scare away its enemies and mockers.⁴⁴

But this is only the official version. Secretly, he drafted one of the most potent and powerful attacks on revelation to date, his *Apologie*.⁴⁵ Since Reimarus himself declared that he had worked on the *Apologie* for approximately thirty years,⁴⁶ one can assume that he started drafting it sometime during the mid-1730s.⁴⁷ But only his closest friends and his children Johann Albert

⁴⁴ Johann Hinrich Oberdörffer, *Den grossen Verlust seines verehrungswürdigsten Lehrers des hochedelgebohrenen und hochgelahrten Herrn Hermann Samuel Reimarus hochberühmter beynahe vierzigjähriger Professors der Morgenländischen Sprachen am Hamburgischen Gymnasio beklagt in tiefster Wehmut* (Hamburg, 1768), 1* (unpaginated):

"Klag um Ihn—o! wie hat Sein Fleiß und Sein Bestreben
So manchen dir zum Wohl gebildet, dir gegeben,
Der dir durch Lehren, so wie durch des Beyspiels Kraft
Dir Christen bildete, du, Hamburgs Priesterschaft.
Du, die das Herz erhebt, und himmlisch reine Freuden
In unsre Seele senkt, und Trost in unserm Leiden,
Wie gründlich kämpfte Er für dich, Religion!
Und nahten Spötter sich, dann sprach Er, und sie flohn—
Ihm dankts die Weisheit. Er bestimmte Ihre Schranken,
Gab Ihr ein hellers Licht, Sie wirds Ihm ewig danken;
Und wagte sich dann kühn ein Witzling in diß Feld,
Sein Wort demüthigte den unvernünftigen Held."

⁴⁵ See note 12 above.

⁴⁶ Numerous drafts of the work do exist, and in an earlier manuscript, Reimarus declared in the preface that he had been working on the piece for approximately thirty years. This statement, however, no longer appears in the final manuscript. Instead, Reimarus simply declares that he had begun drafting "many years ago" ("vor vielen Jahren"), which again does not help much. See Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander, 41: "Die Schrifft, wozu ich hier den Vorbericht mache, ist schon vor vielen Jahren von mir aufgesetzt worden."

⁴⁷ The exact time when Reimarus started writing the *Apologie* is still a matter of debate. Earlier scholars such as Henning von Reventlow have claimed that Reimarus's views must have shifted during his stay in England and Holland, where he was exposed to the writings of the English deists. See Henning von Reventlow, "Das Arsenal der Bibelkritik des Reimarus: Die Auslegung der Bibel, insbesondere des Alten Testaments, bei den englischen Deisten," in *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768), ein "bekannter Unbekannter" der Aufklärung in Hamburg*, ed. Wolfgang Walter (Göttingen, 1973), 45. More recently, Peter Stemmer has suggested that Reimarus's renunciation of Christianity must have occurred during the mid-1730s. See Peter Stemmer, *Weissagung und Kritik. Eine Studie zur Hermeneutik bei Hermann Samuel Reimarus* (Göttingen, 1983), 92–93.

Hinrich (1729–1814) and Elise Reimarus (1735–1805)⁴⁸ knew about this work. Even though some of these confidants seem to have urged Reimarus to make public his views about revelation, he remained silent throughout his entire lifetime.⁴⁹ Only in 1814, when Johann Albert Hinrich Reimarus decided to donate the manuscript to the public library in Hamburg, did he reveal the identity of the work's author in a letter attached to the codex.⁵⁰ Not until 1972, more than two hundred years after its composition, was the entire work published, edited by Gerhard Alexander.

This history also accounts for the limitations of Reimarus scholarship up to this point. Rather than being acknowledged in his own right, Reimarus remained for a long time the Wolfenbüttel fragmentist. This may explain why Reimarus scholarship has often been closely connected to his editor Lessing, the latter's theological position,⁵¹ and the Fragment Controversy in general.⁵²

48 Almut Spalding, *Elise Reimarus (1735–1805): The Muse of Hamburg: A Woman of the German Enlightenment* (Würzburg, 2005).

49 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 56: “Es haben zwar wohl ein Paar vertraute Freunde, mit welchen ich diese Schrift, oder einen Theil davon, in Überlegung genommen hatte, sehr in mich gedrungen, daß ich ihnen erlauben möchte einen Gebrauch zum Nutzen anderer Menschen davon zu machen. Sie hatten in der That viele Gründe für sich. Ich würde vielleicht vielen Tausenden ihre inner Unruhe, daraus sie sich selbst allein nicht heraus helfen könnten, benehmen [...]. Aber alles das hat mich nicht bewegen können, in die Abschrift und Bekanntmachung meines Aufsatzes zu willigen [...]”

50 The letter reads: “Was den Charakter des Verfassers betrifft, so ist unter uns allgemein bekannt, daß er keineswegs leichtsinnig, sondern vielmehr ernsthaft und nachdenkend gewesen, stets als ein rechtschaffener Mann angesehen worden, und mit ruhigem, der Ewigkeit froh entgegensehendem Gemüthe aus dieser Welt geschieden ist, so wie er auch mit seinen Schriften wahre Verehrung Gottes zu befördern gesucht hat. Warum soll ich es auch jetzt in meinem Alter verschweigen? Er ist mein Vater: Hermann Samuel Reimarus, Professor in Hamburg”; quoted from Alexander's preface to Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 17.

51 The question of Lessing's theology or religion has been and still is widely discussed. See, for example, Georges Pons, *Gotthold Ephraim Lessing et le Christianisme* (Paris, 1964); Toshimasa Yasukata, *Lessing's Philosophy of Religion and the German Enlightenment: Lessing on Christianity and Reason* (New York and Oxford, 2002), 18–28.

52 See, for example, Boehart, *Politik und Religion*; Henning Graf Reventlow, “Die Auffassung vom Alten Testament bei Hermann Samuel Reimarus und Gotthold Ephraim Lessing,” *Evangelische Theologie* 25 (1965), 429–48; Else Walravens, “H.S. Reimarus und G.E. Lessing. Zwei Richtungen von Aufklärung in Deutschland,” *Tijdschrift voor de Studie van de Verlichting en van het Vrije Denken* 10 (1982), 57–73; for a more substantial list on the subject, see Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, ed., *Hermann Samuel Reimarus: Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie* (Göttingen, 1979), 89–137.

Although there has been a significant body of older scholarship on Reimarus, it is at times still theologically and apologetically charged.⁵³

Significant for the future course of Reimarus scholarship was undoubtedly Albert Schweitzer's (1875–1965) groundbreaking *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* [From Reimarus to Wrede: The Quest of the Historical Jesus].⁵⁴ According to Schweitzer, “no one had attempted to form a historical conception of the life of Jesus” before Reimarus. He praises the fifth fragment published by Lessing, his *Von dem Zwecke Jesu und seiner Jünger* (1778) [The Goal of Jesus and His Disciples] as “a masterpiece of world literature.”⁵⁵ The immediate and long-term effect of Schweitzer's work was that Reimarus became a household name at least within the walls of theological seminaries, where it has maintained its place on course syllabuses.⁵⁶ But even Schweitzer lamented that a complete edition of Reimarus's radical work was still missing and he had to base his own insights on what had been available to him. Aside from the five fragments that Lessing published, Karl Wilhelm Klose (1804–1873), librarian of the Stadtbibliothek in Hamburg, published more excerpts in the *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie*,⁵⁷ but stopped when interest seemed to dwindle. Although the theologian David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874)⁵⁸ was full of admiration for Reimarus and mentions him in the same breath as Spinoza, he also eventually abstained from trying to publish the entire *Apologie*.⁵⁹

53 See, for example, August Chr. Lundsteen, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und die Anfänge der Leben-Jesu Forschung* (Copenhagen, 1939); for a complete list, see Schmidt-Biggemann, *Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie*, 134–36.

54 Albert Schweitzer, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede. Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesu Forschung* (Tübingen, 1906).

55 Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. W. Montgomery et al. (Minneapolis, 2001), 14–16.

56 The work continues to be reissued by a number of publishers, including Dover Publications (2005) and Augsburg Fortress Press (2001).

57 Karl Wilhelm Klose, “Hermann Samuel Reimarus ‘Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes’. In neu ausgewählten Fragmenten herausgegeben,” *Zeitschrift für historische Theologie* 14 (1850), 519–637; 15 (1851), 513–78; 16 (1852), 380–494.

58 Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Kritik und Pseudo-Spekulation. David Friedrich Strauss als Dogmatiker im Kontext der positionellen Theologie seiner Zeit* (Munich, 1982); Horton Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology* (Cambridge and New York, 1973).

59 David Friedrich Strauss, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und seine Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (Leipzig, 1862), v–x: “Unter den Vätern der heutigen kritischen Theologie wußte ich ihm an harmonischer Abrundung des ganzen Wesens nur Spinoza zu vergleichen, den er an Schneide des thatkräftigen Wollens noch zu übertreffen schien [...]. An eine Herausgabe des ganzen Werkes dachte ich, nachdem ich es in

The situation changed when, at the suggestion of Hans Blumenberg (1920–1996), the Joachim-Jungius Society in Hamburg decided to publish and reissue Reimarus's literary legacy, including the still-unpublished *Apologie*.⁶⁰ After the *Apologie* was published in 1972, a reprint of the *Vernunftlehre* was published in 1979,⁶¹ followed by the *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere* in 1982⁶² and the *Vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion* in 1985.⁶³ The Reimarus commission also organized a symposium in 1972, which for the first time undertook a broader treatment of Reimarus in the context of the Enlightenment and biblical criticism. It presented its findings under the title *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768): ein “bekannter Unbekannter” der Aufklärung in Hamburg* [Hermann Samuel Reimarus: A “Well-Known Unknown” of the Enlightenment in Hamburg].⁶⁴ Scholars such as Günter Gawlick⁶⁵ and Henning Graf Reventlow⁶⁶ for the first time showed how English deism influenced Reimarus's criticism of revelation. A few years later, in 1979, Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann took great pains to record every known published and unpublished work by Reimarus,⁶⁷ and in 1980, Gerhard Alexander reissued the auction catalogue of Reimarus's library.⁶⁸ These publications

Händen hatte, nicht mehr [...]. [Wenn] man es jetzt noch als Ganzes herausgeben wollte, würde es schwerlich viele Leser finden.”

- 60 Wolfgang Walter, “Einleitung,” in *Hermann Samuel Reimarus, 1694–1768. Beiträge zur Reimarus-Renaissance in der Gegenwart*, ed. Wolfgang Walter (Göttingen, 1998), 9.
- 61 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Vernunftlehre*, ed. and intr. Frieder Lötzsch, 2 vols. (Munich, 1979).
- 62 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere*, ed. and intr. by Jürgen von Kempf et al., 2 vols. (Göttingen, 1982).
- 63 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion*, ed. and intr. by Günter Gawlick et al., 2 vols. (Göttingen, 1985).
- 64 Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768): ein “bekannter Unbekannter” der Aufklärung in Hamburg* (Göttingen, 1973).
- 65 Günter Gawlick, “Der Deismus als Grundzug der Religionsphilosophie der Aufklärung,” in *ibid.*, 29.
- 66 Henning Graf Reventlow, “Das Arsenal der Bibelkritik des Reimarus. Die Auslegung der Bibel, insbesondere des Alten Testaments, bei den englischen Deisten,” in *ibid.*, 44–65; on English deism and its treatment of the Bible, see Reventlow, “English Rationalism, Deism and Early Biblical Criticism,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Saebø, vol. 2 (Göttingen, 2008), 851–74.
- 67 See Schmidt-Biggemann, ed., *Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie*.
- 68 Gerhard Alexander, J.A.G. Schetelig, Joachim Jungius-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, & Lessing-Akademie, *Auktionskatalog der Bibliothek von Hermann Samuel Reimarus: Redigiert von Johann Andreas Gottfried Schetelig, Hamburg, 1769 und 1770: alphabeticisches Register* (Hamburg, 1978–80); on Reimarus's library, see Johann Anselm Steiger, “Der

seemed to provide the perfect tools for scholars to embark on a comprehensive treatment of Reimarus as a scholar and biblical critic. In 1983, Peter Stemmer undertook for the first time a study of the hermeneutics of Reimarus, showing how it began as Lutheran *hermeneutica sacra*, codified in the theological works of Matthias Flacius (1520–1575),⁶⁹ Salomon Glassius (1593–1656),⁷⁰ and Johann Jacob Rambach (1693–1735).⁷¹ Reimarus's lecture entitled *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum* [Defense of the Pronouncements of the Old Testaments adduced in the New], from 1731, embodied this approach.⁷² According to Stemmer, the shift to a radical criticism of revelation must have occurred sometime between his lecture of 1731 and 1736, when Reimarus wrote a review of Johann Lorenz Schmidt's (1702–1749) notorious Wertheim Bible.⁷³ The latter provided a new translation of the Pentateuch that ultimately disregarded any Christian theological concerns, such as possible references to Christ. From Stemmer's point of view, the anonymously published review indicated that Reimarus had already discarded the principles of an orthodox *hermeneutica sacra*.⁷⁴ Such insights develop an interesting dynamic if they are taken with the findings of Almut Spalding and Paul Spalding that Reimarus may have sheltered Schmidt under the pseudonym of Schroeder, when the latter was on the run and passed through Hamburg.⁷⁵ But despite these forays, the scope of Reimarus scholarship has remained remarkably limited. Scholars have focused almost exclusively on the philosophical foundations of his radical criticism,

Buchbesitz des Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768)," in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, eds. Johann Anselm Steiger and Sandra Richter (Berlin, 2012), 253–62.

69 Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Clavis scripturae seu de sermone sacrarum literarum* (Basel, 1567).

70 Salomon Glassius, *Philologia sacra* (Leipzig, 1713).

71 Johann Jacob Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae* (Jena, 1725).

72 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum*, 1731, ed. and intr. by Peter Stemmer (Göttingen, 1983).

73 Johann Lorenz Schmidt, *Die Göttlichen Schriften vor den Zeiten des Meßias Jesus 1ster Theil, welcher die Gesetze der Israeliten in sich begreift. Nach einer freyen Übersetzung, welche durch und durch mit Anmerkungen erläutert, und bestätigt wird* (Wertheim, 1735).

74 Peter Stemmer, *Weissagung und Kritik. Eine Studie zur Hermeneutik bei Hermann Samuel Reimarus* (Göttingen, 1983), 142; somewhat critical of Stemmer are Wolfgang Gericke, "Zur theologischen Entwicklung von Hermann Samuel Reimarus," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 114 (1989), 859–62 and Hans Hübner, "Die 'orthodoxe' hermeneutica sacra des Hermann Samuel Reimarus," in *Die Hermeneutik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, ed. Manfred Beetz et al. (Cologne, 2000), 99–111.

75 Almut Spalding and Paul Spalding, "Derrätselhafte Tutor bei Hermann Samuel Reimarus. Begegnungen zweier radikaler Aufklärer in Hamburg," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hamburgische Geschichte* 87 (2001), 49–64.

viewing him in the narrow constraints of Enlightenment deism⁷⁶ and heavily indebted to Wolffian rationalism.⁷⁷ Studies about the influence of radical works such as *De tribus impostoribus*,⁷⁸ Reimarus's position in the Republic of Letters,⁷⁹ his contribution to pedagogy,⁸⁰ and his relationship toward Judaism remain exceptions.⁸¹ This is especially true for the English-speaking world, where Reimarus continues to languish in the shadows of Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Kant. Fairly recently, however, partly due to the study of previously unpublished and unexplored manuscript material, new avenues in Reimarus research have been taken. Martin Mulsow, for example, has broken new ground by including Reimarus in his study of clandestine networks,⁸² and Dietrich Klein has undertaken a comprehensive treatment of Reimarus's theological works, including the *Apologie*.⁸³

The present work follows in the footsteps of such recent attempts to chart little-explored territory in Reimarus research. In 2003, by a stroke of luck, I came across a cache of fifty-nine letters written by Reimarus over the course of nearly twenty years.⁸⁴ Addressed to Angelo Maria Querini (1680–1755), librarian

⁷⁶ Günter Gawlick, "Reimarus und der englische Deismus," in *Religionskritik und Religiosität in der Deutschen Aufklärung*, ed. Karlfried Gründer and Karl Heinrich Rengstorff (Heidelberg, 1989), 43–54.

⁷⁷ Note that this is a reference to the philosopher Christian Wolff (1679–1754) from Halle, not to Reimarus's mentor, the Hebarist Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739). Norbert Hinske, "Reimarus zwischen Wolff und Kant," in *Logik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Studien zur 'Vernunftlehre' von Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Wolfgang Walter and Ludwig Borinski (Göttingen, 1980), 9–32.

⁷⁸ Wolfgang Gericke, "Hermann Samuel Reimarus und die Untergrundliteratur seiner Zeit," in *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, ed. Martin Brecht et al., vol. 18 (1992), 118–31.

⁷⁹ William Boehart, "Hermann Samuel Reimarus in der 'Gelehrten Republik' des 18. Jahrhunderts. Fragen nach den Grenzen einer 'bürgerlichen' Aufklärung," in *Lessing zur Jahrtausendwende. Rückblicke und Ausblicke*, ed. Dieter Fratzke and Wolfgang Albrecht (Kamenz, 2001), 127–40.

⁸⁰ Jürgen Overhoff, "Vernunft und Menschlichkeit—Hermann Samuel Reimarus als Wegbereiter der philanthropischen Pädagogik," in *Bildungsgeschichte(n) in Quellen*, ed. J.-W. Link and F. Tosch (Bad Heilbrunn, 2007), 29–40.

⁸¹ See, for example, Gerhard Alexander, "Moses Mendelssohn und Hermann Samuel Reimarus," in *Judentum im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, ed. Karl Heinrich Rengstorff (Wolfenbüttel, 1977), 187–209.

⁸² Martin Mulsow, *Monadenlehre, Hermetik und Deismus. Georg Schades geheime Aufklärungsgesellschaft, 1747–1760* (Hamburg, 1998), 163–76.

⁸³ Klein, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus*.

⁸⁴ That "stroke of luck" came in the form of an email from Dr. Ennio Ferraglio, director of the Biblioteca Queriniana in Brescia, who brought these letters to my attention. I can hardly thank him enough for that. The letters were written roughly (some letters are not dated)

of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the letters chronicle Reimarus's work on his celebrated edition of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. They show Reimarus as a skilled Graecist, an expert in the world of ancient history and textual criticism. Such findings and further study of the Reimarus papers in Hamburg made me aware of what crucial roles philology and the study of antiquities played in Reimarus's life. Not only was he brought up by two experts in the field, but his position at the *Gymnasium illustre* required him to train students in subjects that included Hebrew and Aramaic, textual criticism, biblical hermeneutics, and Jewish antiquities. The auction catalogue of his library is equally a testimony to these interests. It lists virtually every key work in the field.⁸⁵ It has often been overlooked that at an early stage in his career Reimarus already had distinguished himself through some smaller publications in the field of Hebrew linguistics.⁸⁶ These insights in conjunction with an intensive examination of the Reimarus *Nachlass* [unpublished Reimarus papers], with its numerous handwritten drafts of the *Apologie*, lecture notes, *adversaria*, and bibliographies, paired with an understanding of his education, the influence of his mentors, and his teaching career as professor of Oriental languages at the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg reveal who Reimarus really was: a classical scholar and skilled Hebraist, raised and bred in the world of the polyhistors. By focusing on Reimarus's use of philology, antiquarianism, and Semitic languages, I show how these fields, developed by humanists and reformers and perfected during the course of the seventeenth century, influenced Reimarus's scholarship and provided the contextual framework for his critical stance toward revelation. In this regard, my project also contributes to the study of antiquarian research, more specifically to the field of sacred antiquarianism.

In the first chapter, I provide insights into Reimarus's educational background, demonstrating how the world of the humanists and polyhistors was still very much alive during the eighteenth century and how it ultimately dictated the curriculum at the *Johanneum* and the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg. By retracing Reimarus's tutelage under his famous mentors, the

between 1736 (the year of Fabricius's death) and 1754 (Querini died in 1755). Forty-eight letters are at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice, four letters at the Biblioteca Queriniana in Brescia, and seven letters at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The location of Querini's responses to these letters is unclear; my own efforts to recover them were unsuccessful.

85 See note 68 as well as Johann Anselm Steiger, "Hermann Samuel Reimarus—Zur Gelehrsamkeit eines Professors am Hamburger Akademischen Gymnasium," in *Das Akademische Gymnasium: Bildung und Wissenschaft in Hamburg, 1613–1883*, ed. Dirk Brietzke et al., 85–91.

86 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *De differentiis vocum Hebraicarum* (Wittenberg, 1717).

humanist Johann Albert Fabricius and the Hebraist Johann Christoph Wolf in Hamburg, I illustrate how much Reimarus was still a product of this world.

In the next chapter, the reader will learn how Reimarus followed in his mentors' footsteps and became professor at his alma mater, the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg. Between his inaugural speech⁸⁷ on 15 July 1727 and his death on 1 March 1768, he held the professorship for Hebrew and Oriental languages, teaching language courses as well as biblical hermeneutics and philology.⁸⁸ One of the most recurring courses on his teaching schedule was an introduction to the *Antiquitates Hebraicae*, which he based on the standard textbooks of the time, Adriaan Reland's *Antiquitates sacrae veterum Hebraeorum*⁸⁹ and, later, Conrad Iken's *Antiquitates Hebraicae*.⁹⁰ The course served future theologians and ministers as an introduction into the world of ancient Judaism so that they would be able to contextualize Old Testament exegesis and, even more importantly, understand references to ritual law in the New Testament. The scholarship produced since the Reformation on that subject was breathtakingly voluminous and is documented by such collections as Blasio Ugolino's magnificent *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum* (1744–69). Despite the growing number of publications in the field of antiquarianism,⁹¹ modern scholars have mainly devoted their attention to the study of profane, Roman and Greek, antiquarianism, but have hardly glanced at the tremendous body of material in the field of sacred and biblical antiquarianism. By situating Reimarus in this world, the chapter also seeks to make a contribution to early modern scholarship in biblical antiquarianism. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, young students of theology were always encouraged to study this material within the strict boundaries of a *hermeneutica sacra* in order to avoid becoming too fond of rabbinic sources and, at the same time, to pay attention to the typological relevance of ancient Jewish ritual. By looking at

87 The title of his inaugural lecture was *De studiis Graecarum literarum atque humanitatis apud priscos Hebraeos*, StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 1.

88 See Schmidt-Biggemann, *Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie*, 28–34.

89 Adriaan Reland, *Antiquitates sacrae veterum Hebraeorum* (Utrecht, 1708).

90 Conrad Iken, *Antiquitates Hebraicae* (Bremen, 1732).

91 Still seminal is Arnaldo Momigliano's "The Rise of Antiquarian Research," in his *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley, 1990), 54–79; for a recent reevaluation of Momigliano's work, see Peter Miller, ed., *Momigliano and Antiquarianism: Foundations of the Modern Cultural Sciences* (Toronto, 2007); for three case studies, see Peter Miller, *Peiresc's Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2000); Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1999); and Daniel Stolzenberg, *Egyptian Oedipus: Athanasius Kircher and the Secrets of Antiquity* (Chicago, 2013).

two of Reimarus's lecture manuscripts from different stages in his teaching career, we shall see how he shifted from an almost exclusively Christological interpretation of ancient Levitic ritual to a purely philological and historical focus, thereby hinting at the subversive potential such an approach might have on the biblical text.

This brings us to the question of what exactly the boundaries were between a *hermeneutica sacra* and a *hermeneutica profana* and how rigorously Lutheran orthodoxy defended the sacred nature of Scripture, often down to a single Hebrew vowel point or a Greek *iota*. The consequences of overstepping such boundaries were painfully experienced by such skilled scholars as Louis Cappel (1585–1658) and, to a lesser extent, Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) and Jean Le Clerc (1657–1736), who had all become stigmatized as profaners of Scripture. Chapter 3 illustrates how Reimarus's focus on biblical philology and history in his Job commentary already deviated from the expected norms of a strict Lutheran *hermeneutica sacra*, depriving the text of its edifying message.

In chapter 4, I document how Reimarus established himself in the Republic of Letters with his two-volume edition of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. As early as the 1720s, Reimarus's father-in-law must have worked on a new edition, but the manuscript remained unpublished until Fabricius's death, when it fell into Reimarus's hands. The project, probably unexpectedly, preoccupied Reimarus for over fifteen years. In this process, he developed an intensive correspondence with Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini, a famous man of letters who helped him not only obtain collations from two Greek manuscripts from the Vatican Library, but also publicized the work throughout the world of learning. The project highlights Reimarus as a skilled textual critic, who put his philological skills to the task of emending, with no hesitation, the *editio princeps* with the help of manuscript sources. This cold philological approach, paired with his mastery of classical languages, ultimately served Reimarus well in his radical attack on revelation.

Chapter 5 ties these different strands together. Here, I show how Reimarus's attack on Scripture drew heavily, though not exclusively, on his skills as a philologist and scholar of Jewish antiquities. After a brief synopsis of the *Apologie*, I show how both philology and the study of Jewish antiquities became instrumental for Reimarus in revealing what he perceived to be flaws and spurious claims in Christian doctrine.

The final chapter provides glimpses of the reception history of the *Apologie*. Focusing on one key episode in the biblical narrative, chapter 6 explores how Reimarus's criticism fits into the overall story of how scholars from both the early modern and the modern period have tried to identify the exact location of the mystical Re(e)d Sea. The chapter also investigates how much Reimarus's

criticism depended on these earlier traditions of biblical scholarship and how these questions are still debated among modern biblical scholars and archaeologists to this day.

On a broader scale, the narrative that follows seeks to contribute to the ever-growing research on the Radical Enlightenment,⁹² a representative of which Reimarus certainly was. By showing how Reimarus's criticism was not based solely on philosophical grounds but rested on philological foundations, I emphasize that Reimarus was part of a much longer tradition that went back to the humanists and reformers. With his profound classical learning, knowledge of ancient Semitic languages, and consciousness of tradition, Reimarus was able to question not only claims about the veracity of the textual integrity of Scripture, but also, what was more relevant in his case, the legitimacy of Christian doctrine in general.

⁹² Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (Boston, 1981); Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (New York, 2001); Martin Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund: Radikale Frühaufklärung in Deutschland, 1680–1720* (Hamburg, 2002); see also Jonathan Israel's *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752* (New York, 2006), his *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750–1790* (New York, 2011), as well as his *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from 'The Rights of Man' to Robespierre* (Princeton, 2014).

From Protégé to Peer

Reimarus at the Hamburg School of Polyhistors

Humanism in Crisis?

On 16 June 1714, Reimarus wrote a letter from Jena to his mentor, the Hebraist Johann Christoph Wolf in Hamburg.¹ Just a few months after he enrolled at the *Salana*, as the university was affectionately called, Reimarus had already made up his mind about his fellow students and the overall conditions at what was still one of Germany's finest institutions of higher education. With nine printing shops and eight bookstores, it assumed the second position only to Leipzig, and between 1711 and 1720, with an average of 720 newly admitted students per year, it was second to none.² Most prominent among students was the department of theology,³ which boasted a tradition that did not at all have to hide behind Wittenberg. During the sixteenth century, both Matthias Flacius (1520–1575) and Simon Musaeus (1521–1576) were members of its faculty; from 1616 until 1637, Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) was on its payroll; and when Reimarus was there, the theological faculty was spearheaded by Johann Franz Buddeus (1667–1729), probably the most important representative of philosophical eclecticism after Christian Thomasius (1655–1728).⁴

One of the institution's jewels was the library. Within just a short period of time, it had amassed a total of over 10,000 volumes, excluding a substantial collection of manuscripts, so that by 1680, one of Jena's professors, the historian Caspar Sagittarius (1643–1694), could boast that the "Academic library was not only on par with those of other German institutions, but left most

¹ See Johann Heinrich von Seelen, *Vita, scriptis et meritis in Rempublicam Literariam Viri [...] Ioan. Christoph. Wolfii* [...] (Stade, 1717); Martin Mulsow, "Johann Christoph Wolf (1683–1739) und die verbotenen Bücher in Hamburg," in *500 Jahre Theologie in Hamburg: Hamburg als Zentrum christlicher Theologie und Kultur zwischen Tradition und Zukunft*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger (New York, 2005), 81–111; "Johann Christoph Wolf," in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, ed. Hans Schröder, vol. 8 (1888), 143–48.

² Max Steinmetz et al., eds., *Geschichte der Universität Jena, 1548/58–1958*, vol. 1 (Jena, 1958), 175–76.

³ Karl Heussi, *Geschichte der Theologischen Fakultät zu Jena* (Weimar, 1954), 176.

⁴ Johann Günther, *Lebensskizzen der Professoren der Universität Jena seit 1558 bis 1858* (Jena, 1858), 7–23; also Arnold F. Stolzenburg, *Die Theologie des Jo. Franc. Buddeus und des Chr. Matth. Pfaff* (Berlin, 1926); more recently, Friederike Nüssel, *Bund und Versöhnung: zur Begründung der Dogmatik bei Johann Franz Buddeus* (Göttingen, 1996).

of them at a considerable distance.”⁵ And Sagittarius was right. Compared to collections of fewer than one thousand books at Greifswald and Marburg, this was impressive at the time. True, there had been reason for some concern about the library since then. An official inspection in 1696 had exposed serious deficiencies. But the administration had responded promptly with an investment of four thousand thalers for a major expansion of the library premises. Also, its former director, the polyhistor Burkhard Gotthelf Struve (1671–1738),⁶ had started to crack down on the professors’ liberal abuse of their borrowing privileges.⁷ Such conditions would most likely have incited envious looks from the margins of the *Respublica literaria*, where skilled instruction and access to knowledge were precious commodities.⁸ But Reimarus himself seemed far from appreciative of his fortune:

Almost all the other [professors] actually do nothing else but dictate the Latin words of Buddeus, which they themselves have copied from a sheet onto their paper, and they reproduce them in more elaborate German, not because of their ignorance of the material, but due to the extreme lack of knowledge and the incredible stupidity of the other students. Those who come here from the country have barely advanced beyond the mere basics of grammar and dutiful conduct; like the dogs on the Nile,⁹ once they have lightly touched on the most important principles of doctrine, they will quickly leave again [...]. I had promised myself much from the library here at Jena, which has indeed accumulated a pretty large collection of books; but since they are all scattered and disorganized, it is thus far hardly useful to anyone [...].¹⁰

5 “[...] nostra bibliotheca academica multas germanicarum academiarum non modo aequat, sed plerasque longo post se relinquit intervallo”; quoted in *Geschichte der Universitätsbibliothek Jena, 1549–1945* (Weimar, 1958), 191.

6 On Struve, see August Ritter von Eisenhart, “Struve, Burkhard Gotthelf,” *ADB* 36 (1893), 671–76.

7 Steinmetz et al., *Geschichte der Universität Jena*, 179–80.

8 See, for instance, Anne Goldgar’s hypothetical minister in the Pays de Vaud, in her splendid *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995), 12–13.

9 Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* VIII.149.1–3) wrote of Egyptian dogs: “Certum est iuxta Nilum amnem currentes lambere, ne crocodilorum aviditati occasionem praebant” [It has been ascertained that they run near the Nile while drinking from it so that they may not fall victim to the voracity of the crocodiles].

10 Letter from Reimarus to Wolf, 16 June 1714, SUB HH, Sup. ep. 119, fols. 417v–418r: “Ceteri vero plerique omnes nil agunt aliud, quam ut ea, quae charta in papyrus descriptsere ipsi, dictent in calamum l[ingua] Latina Buddei verba, germanicis iisque amplioribusque

Reimarus's complaint about the general quality of educational preparation of his fellow students, especially their lack of classical training, is by no means unique and must have sounded quite familiar in Wolf's ears. The union of humanists and reformers during the sixteenth century, their different premises and goals notwithstanding,¹¹ had ultimately led to often profound changes in primary, secondary, and higher education.¹² Since "God had a reason for putting his writings exclusively in two languages, the Old Testament in Hebrew, the New in Greek,"¹³ there was little need to provide much additional justification for a great emphasis on the *res quae ad humaniores disciplinas pertinent*. Every future theologian needed to be able to read the sources of divine revelation in the original and all of the illustrious church fathers such as "Tertullian, Origen, and Jerome," who "repressed and refuted the wicked principles of all kinds of heretics, profanizers, Jews, Gnostics, and others."¹⁴ But although the Protestant Reformers under the leadership of the *praeceptor Germaniae*¹⁵ Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560)¹⁶ put much effort into the *corrigenda*

reddere conentur, cuius quidem rei non ipsorum imperitia, sed summa ignorantia plerumque discentium et incredibilis stupor causa est. Hi enim ultra prima Grammatices et pietatis elementa vix quicquam progressi, e Vicinia huc advolant, mox, ubi summa capita Doctrinarum, ut canes Nilum, degustaverint, rursus abituri [...]. Multa mihi promisseram de Bibliotheca hac Jenensi, et est profecto satis magno librorum apparatu instructa, sed quoniam disjecta sunt omnia atque inter se permixta, paucis huc usque usui esse potuit [...]."

¹¹ Wilhelm Kühlmann, "Pädagogische Konzeptionen," in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, ed. Notker Hammerstein et al., vol. 1 (Munich, 1996), 165; Friedrich Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1919), 182–83.

¹² Arno Seifert, "Das höhere Schulwesen: Universitäten und Gymnasien," in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, ed. Hammerstein et al., vol. 1, 253–312.

¹³ Martin Luther, "An die Burgermeyster und Radherrn allerley stedte ynn Deutschen landen (1524)," in *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, vol. 15 (Weimar, 1899), 37: "Denn Gott hat seyne schriftt nicht umb sonst alleyn ynn die zwo sprachen schreiben lassen, das alte testament ynn die Ebreische, das new ynn die Kriechische."

¹⁴ Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Bigae orationum pro defendis bonis literis adversus philosophos recentiores eos qui illas contemnunt [...]* (Helmstedt, 1748), lx: "Ab his patres eruditissimi, Tertullianus, Origines, Hieronymus, et quos veneramur reliquos, haereticorum omnis generis, profanorum, Iudeorum, Gnosticorum, ceterorumque impia placita retuderunt et confutarunt."

¹⁵ Karl Hartfelder, *Philipp Melanchthon als Praeceptor Germaniae* (Berlin, 1889).

¹⁶ Asaph Ben-Tov, *Lutheran Humanists and Greek Antiquity: Melanchthonian Scholarship between Universal History and Pedagogy* (Leiden, 2009).

*adolescentiae studia*¹⁷ and managed to banish the despised scholasticism to the deepest corners of the Catholic provinces, their long-term successes at the pre-collegiate level were at best mixed in nature. To be sure, numerous Latin schools were founded and curricula written and revised.¹⁸ Whether they used Melanchthon's *Enchiridion elementorum puerilium* (1525)¹⁹ or some other elementary textbook, by the age of six ideally, but no later than the age of nine, students were usually expected to possess fluency in Latin and German, in addition to having been exposed to carefully allotted doses of Greek and Hebrew.²⁰

What sounded good in theory, however, did not always find its way into practice. By the late sixteenth century, the humanist Johannes Caselius (1533–1613) from Helmstedt complained that proficiency among students in Greek had virtually disappeared and that their Latin resembled some incomprehensible stammer.²¹ The repercussions of these shortfalls at the elementary and secondary level were most heartfelt at the university level, where students often lacked the skill to follow simple lectures in Latin. Universities were thus often forced to allot some time to teaching the basics of the liberal arts curriculum before moving on to more challenging material. Not surprisingly, then, the judgment of several of Reimarus's contemporaries, or near contemporaries,

¹⁷ See Philipp Melanchthon: *De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis* (Paris, 1527); *Ain nutzbarliche, schöne Ermanung herrn Philippi Melanchthonis an ain Erbare Statt zu anrichtung der Lateinischen Schulen* (Augsburg, 1543); *Ein schriftt Philippi Melanchthonis an ein erbare Stadt von anrichtung der Lateinischen Schuel Nützlich zu lesen* (Wittenberg, 1543).

¹⁸ Reinhold Vormbaum, *Evangelische Schulordnungen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Gütersloh, 1860); Helmut Liedtke, *Theologie und Pädagogik der Deutschen Evangelischen Schule im 16. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf, 1970).

¹⁹ Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, vol. 1, 279.

²⁰ Daniel Georg Morhof writes, for example, about the pedagogy of Michael Neander: "Michael Neander, vir doctissimus, & multae in informanda juventute ἐμπειρίας, Germanica lingua *consilium de informanda juventute* edidit, Islebi Anno 1583. in octavo editum, in quo ille monstrat, quomodo puer a sexto aetatis anno ad 18. pietate, lingua Latina, Graeca, Hebraica, Artibus & universa Philosophia institui possit. A sexto anno usque ad initium noni puerum exerceri vult lengendo in utraque lingua, Germani & Latina: cui usui adhibendum suadet Compendium Grammaticae Philippi, ut simul cum literis ejus libri usum familiarem sibi faciat [...]," in Morhof, *Polyhistor, Literarius, Philosophicus et Practicus* [...], 3rd ed. (Lübeck, 1732), vol. 1, 445.

²¹ Ibid., 460: "Querebatur iam suo tempore Johannes Caselius, magnus in solida doctrina suo tempore Hercules, de hac in Academiis socordia & negligentia: nam in eleganti illo libello, qui Νέος καὶ Προδιδάσκαλος ab illo inscribitur, narrat [...] veniret nunc in Germaniae Academias, & in Graeca lingua plerosque obmutuisse, in Latina balbutire [...] deprehenderet."

sounds very much like a funeral eulogy for traditional classical education. In his inaugural speech on the occasion of his appointment to the professorship of eloquence at the University of Leiden in 1693,²² the famous humanist Jacob Perizonius (1651–1715)²³ nostalgically looked back to a golden age when the splendor of Lipsius, Baudius, Meursius, Heinsius, Gronovius, and most of all, the “princes of learning Scaliger and Salmasius” illuminated the dignified lecture halls of Leiden.²⁴ To Perizonius, however, the prospects were ultimately more unsettling. College freshmen of his time showed little promise and potential to follow in the footsteps of these giants of erudition. In fact, most students “who have been led to the benches of [Leiden University] from the lower Latin schools” had not even “put down the basics of the liberal arts and doctrines” nor “finished all fundamentals” so that they would ultimately be ready to handle more challenging material that is “carefully chosen from the secret treasures of literature.”²⁵

But what Perizonius perceived as a minor disaster, visitors from the East hardly viewed as such, since the situation in Germany was by far worse. When

²² See J.H. Waszink, “Classical Philology,” in *Leiden University in the Seventeenth Century: An Exchange of Learning*, ed. G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes et al. (Leiden, 1975), 161–75.

²³ On Perizonius, see Arnaldo Momigliano, “Perizonius, Niebuhr and the Character of Early Roman Tradition,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 47 (1957), 104–14; H.J. Erasmus, *The Origins of Rome in Historiography from Petrarch to Perizonius* (Assen, 1962); Theodorus J. Meijer, *Kritiek als Herwaardering: het Levenswerk van Jacob Perizonius (1651–1715)* (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 1971); Ronald T. Ridley, *The Historical Observations of Jacob Perizonius* (Rome, 1991); for an interesting facet of Perizonius’s idea of the *Artes historicae* and his quarrel with Jean Le Clerc, see Anthony Grafton, *What was History: The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 2007), 1–62.

²⁴ Jacob Perizonius, “De usu atque utilitate Graecae Romanaeque Linguae, Eloquentiae, Historiae, & Antiquitatis in gravioribus disciplinis [...] (1693),” in Johann Erhard Kapp, *Clarissimorum Virorum Orationes Selectae [...]* (Leipzig, 1722), 139: “Quid autem, quando in mentem venit felicium Animarum, quae olim hoc Museum suae eruditio[n]is splendore illustrarunt, eiusque gloriam per totum diffuderunt terrarum Orbem? Lipsios dico, Baudios, Meursios, Heinsios, Gronovios: ut taceam illustrissimos litterarum Principes, Scaligeros, & Salmasios, in quibus omnia pene quiddam humano modulo maius & augustinus spirabant [...]”

²⁵ Ibid., 141–42: “Nec enim contingit nobis hoc tempore tam esse beatis, ut Ornatisimos ceteroquin Adolescentes ex inferioribus Scholis ad Adacemica haec subfellia productos reperiamus ipsa liberalium artium doctrinarumque rudimenta iam posuisse, primitiasque exhausisse omnes, ut adeo nihil heic debeat audire, nisi quod sit exquisitum diligenter, aut ex reconditis petutum & interioribus litteris.”

the German classical scholar Jacob Burckhard (1681–1752),²⁶ who would later become chief librarian of the *Bibliotheca Augusta* in Wolfenbüttel, heard Perizonius expound in one of his lectures the comedies of Publius Terentius, he was not so much surprised by the latter's skill and learning as he was by the large number of students who attended. It led him to conclude that "these studies are treated much better today in Holland than in our very large Germany."²⁷ According to Burckhard, no other nation in Europe would be more suited to promote ancient learning than the Germans, who, among other things, had preserved Roman law.²⁸ But instead, the Latin schools, which once endowed students with the proper foundations of a liberal arts education, have become corrupted and perverted.²⁹ Whereas students formerly embraced classical learning, continues Burckhard, they no longer cultivated this love in the same way that it was still done, to a certain extent, in Italy, England, France, or Holland.³⁰ Responsible for this movement away from classical education was the ambition of Latin schools to become like universities and to focus more on the teaching of other subjects rather than promote ancient learning. A few decades earlier, the theologian Georg Calixt (1586–1656) had made similar observations.³¹

According to Calixt, the culprits in the demise of the classical tradition and learning were educators and teachers in the Latin schools and *Gymnasia*

²⁶ Otto von Heinemann, "Burckhard, Jakob" in *ADB* 3 (1876), 570.

²⁷ Jacob Burckhard, *Quid caussae sit cur humanitatis studiis maius hodieque a Batavis quam a Germanis statuatur pretium [...]* (Hildburghausen, 1715), 10–11: "Melius tamen multo, si vere dicere volumus, in Batavis cum iisdem studiis hodieque agitur, quam in latissima nostra Germania [...]. Ego quidem, decem circiter abhinc annis miratum me esse, libere confiteor, quum praesens cernerem, excellentissimum Perizonium frequenti auditorio, idque intra privatos parietes, nec parvo didactro, Publili Comoedias explicare. Satis cognovi, quantum Batavorum iudicium in colendis Humanitatis studiis a Germanorum sensu distet."

²⁸ Ibid., 19: "Quod si rem recte perpenderimus, nulli in omni Europa nationi & Antiquitatis & Linguae Romanae studium amplecti magis convenire, fatendum nobis erit, quam ipsis Germanis, qui Romanas leges retinuerint [...]. Sed tamen Germani & in Antiquitate & Lingua Romana cognoscenda a Batavorum in primis sollertia suum studium longe superari adhuc passi sunt, hodieque patiuntur."

²⁹ Ibid., 18: "At ex tempore exstiterint in Germania, qui inferiores istas scholas academiarum instar esse voluerint, corrumpi ac depravari omnia coepisse, prudentiores notarunt."

³⁰ Ibid., 12: "Germaniam videlicet Humanitatis studiorum, quae ducentis abhinc annis tanto complexa erat amore, ad quae excolenda tanto animi impetu ac contentione ferebatur tum, nec Italiae, nec Angliae, nec Galliae, nec Belgio hac in re concederet, satietas dudum cepit."

³¹ Still very helpful is Theodor Henke's *Georg Calixt und seine Zeit*, 2 vols. (Halle, 1853–60).

illustria, who “have students read or go over more exalted disciplines and *realia*.” Rather than teaching students the “proper foundations, upon which later the whole weight of solid doctrine and true learning would rest,” and letting students “learn the languages Latin and Greek from real authors, since they are the key to treasures that all previous centuries have hidden from our use,” these misguided teachers act like university professors, because they “teach something that they have never learned themselves and that their students neither understand nor are able to understand at that age.”³² Even blunter about the causes for the decline of the *studia humanitatis* was Johann Benedict Carpzov (1720–1803),³³ later professor of theology at the University of Helmstedt. According to Carpzov, the chief cause for the devaluation of Greek and Latin was the increased predilection of teachers and professors for modern philosophy and the conviction that one could easily do away with the philosophy of the ancients.³⁴ Its proponents, however, are so ignorant that they do not even realize the extent of their debt to ancient writers³⁵ and

³² Quoted in Henke, *Georg Calixt*, vol. 1, 69: “Oportebat ibi ponere fundamenta, quibus in posterum niteretur tota moles solidae doctrinae, & verae eruditio: oportebat ex genuinis auctoribus addiscere linguas, Latinam & Graecam; quae claves sunt thesaurorum, quos in nostros usus omnia superiora saecula recondiderunt: & oportebat ita addiscere, ut & aliorum, praesertim optimorum auctorum, mentem adsequi, & propriam sententiam commode & perspicue exponere haud foret difficile [...]. Nunc autem multis in locis contra comparatum esse videmus: pueri priusquam fari didicerint, & linguam vocibus aptandis formaverint, ordine praepostero [...] ad disciplinas sublimiores & reales, ut vocare consuevimus, transire, sive translire iubentur. Placent autem & plaudent, & sibi docti videntur eius monetae paedagogi, dum docent, quae numquam ipsi didicerunt, & quae discipuli nec capiunt, nec capere per aetatem possunt [...]”; see Manfred Fuhrmann, *Latin und Europa: Geschichte des Gelehrten Unterrichts in Deutschland von Karl dem Grossen bis Wilhelm II.* (Cologne, 2001), 77.

³³ Christian Siegfried, “Carpzov, Johann Benedict III (1720–1803),” in *ADB* 4 (1876), 22.

³⁴ Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Bigae orationum* [...], xxxii: “Indignamini, esse alios deploratae ferme sanitatis, qui artes elegantiores, ac literatura genus omne irrident, et arrepta quavis occasione, in chartis suis Volusianis, summos viros, qui omnia illos docere possent, traducunt, eos Criticos et Grammaticos (quae honoris nomina sunt et dignitatis) per contemptum tamen, nuncupant, illamque grammaticam et critiken a philosophiae placitis omnino remotam esse, iactitant, necessario oportere; humaniores autem literas, artesque, ac elegantiam in dicendo, et cum veteribus auctoribus consuetudinem, abesse a philosophia certe posse, sibi et aliis persuadent. O! crassam putidam ignorantiae perversitatem! O! praeposteram argutiarum insilsarum despiciuntiam!”

³⁵ Carpzov’s tirade has at times strong reverberations of the “querelle des anciens et des modernes.” On the subject, see Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991).

philosophers.³⁶ But how could they, since they were no longer capable of reading them in the original Latin or Greek!³⁷

Carpzov's forceful argument notwithstanding, contemporary philosophy should not have to bear more than its fair share of the blame. Secondary education came increasingly under pressure to adjust to the growing need of allotting more time to instruction in the sciences and to the vernacular languages.³⁸ In France, the status of Latin had been severely challenged by the foundation of the Académie Française and its promotion of the vernacular.³⁹ But the triumphal advance of French culture and language did not stop there. The abbot of Loccum, Justus Christoph Böhmer (1670–1732), complained in 1709 that people in Germany increasingly believed that the "cultivation of Latin learning" was "exceedingly less necessary," because the vernacular alone would suffice to fulfill the duties of civil and sacred office.⁴⁰ More unsettling, however, was that people in Germany were drawn to the luster of French. This happened to such an extent that it seemed as if "nothing elegant, stylish, or refined could be said

36 Carpzov, *Bigae orationum*, liii: "[...] hinc universas omnium disciplinarum doctrinas, quas barbari recentiores, novas esse, et ante inauditas garriunt, deducimus: hinc iucundissimis verbis, et eloquentissimis protrahimus, quae antiquorum scriptorum ignorantes pro suis iactitant."

37 Ibid., lvi–lvii: "Iam ista quomodo intelligi fragmenta, sine interiore linguae Latinae cognitione, possint, non video. et ipsae leges apud Quirites, quia ex sapientibus Atheniensium, et Lacedaemoniorum scitis collectae sunt, quis Graeci sermonis rudior eas planissime capiet? quis ergo Romani iuris scientiam obtinebit absque critica et literis humanioribus? Immo vero Hotomanus, at quantus vir, vos obsecro! leges Romanas intelligi, sine Ciceronis orationibus non posse, pronunciabat [...]."

38 Fuhrmann, *Latein und Europa*, 84–85.

39 See, for example, the statement of Justus Christoph Böhmer in his *De cognatione artium quae ad humanitatem pertinent* [...] (Helmstedt, 1709), 7*: "Exculta sine dubio feliciter est lingua Gallica, posteaquam Richelius Cardinalis academiam Franciam condidit, ut viri solertes ac erudit sermonem vernaculum perpolirent [...]; on the subject, see Lawrence Brockliss, *French Higher Education in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Cultural History* (Oxford, 1987), 117–18; Françoise Waquet, *Latin, or the Empire of a Sign: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (London, 2001), 9.

40 Böhmer, *De cognatione artium quae ad humanitatem pertinent* [...], 4*: "Quos inter merito illos retuleris, quorum plurimi sunt hac nostra aetate, qui arbitrantur, Latinarum litterarum, quae inter humaniora studia exsplendescunt, cultu vel ideo haut magnopere opus hodie esse, quod quae discenda nobis sunt, qui in Germania vivimus, et in hac patria nostra communi ad officia quam sacra, tam civilia adsipiramus, solius linguae vernaculae nostrae beneficio discere adfatum possimus [...]."

unless it was in French.”⁴¹ The disillusioned portrayal of the state of the classics by contemporaries makes us wonder why Reimarus was in a position to frown on the skill of his fellow students. If all schools were increasingly corrupted and overrun by the vernacular, and if proficiency in Latin and Greek, not to mention Hebrew, was slumping, why would Reimarus in fact have been better prepared than others to ascend to the spheres of higher learning?

An “Eton” on the Elbe, or Hamburg “Prep”

The “lack of dramatic reforms” in the Hamburg schools during Reimarus’s youth may, in fact, have come as a blessing.⁴² Whereas many schools had indeed started to put a greater emphasis on the vernacular and the teaching of more “practical subjects,” classical philology still dominated the curriculum of Reimarus’s elementary education.⁴³ Not that we are speaking about some random school here. Reimarus had been in the fortunate position of having attended one of the finest and most prestigious Latin schools in the country. Since its founding in 1529 by the famous Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558),⁴⁴ a close friend of Melanchthon’s, the *Johanneum*⁴⁵ had been committed to the

⁴¹ Ibid., 7*: “[...] sunt, qui solum Gallicum sermonem, imperii Gallici scilicet praecursorem, suspiciunt hodie atque admirantur, quasi nihil elegans, concinnum ac urbanum dici possit, nisi Gallice dicatur [...]”; Anthony Grafton, “The World of the Polyhistorians: Humanism and Encyclopedism,” *Central European History* 18, no. 1, *The Culture of the Holy Roman Empire, 1540–1680* (1985), 42.

⁴² Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, vol. 1, 594–95.

⁴³ Not much seems to have changed during the first decades of the eighteenth century, when Reimarus’s son, Johann Albert Hinrich, attended the *Johanneum*: “Es war aber dazu-mahl die Betreibung der sogenannten Philologie (Wortkenntnisse) noch dermaassen herrschend, daß fast alle Gelehrsamkeit in Kenntnisse der alten Sprachen, und dem was dahin gehöret, zu bestehen geglaubt wurde [...]”; see Johann Albert Hinrich Reimarus, *Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst aufgesetzt* (Hamburg, 1814), 3.

⁴⁴ See Karl August Traugott Vogt, *Johannes Bugenhagen Pomeranus: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften* (Elberfeld, 1867); more recently, Traugott Koch, “Der Ehrbaren Stadt Hamburg Christliche Ordnung’ durch Johannes Bugenhagen (1529),” in *500 Jahre Theologie in Hamburg*, ed. Steiger, 1–15; more specifically, Kurt Karl Hendel, “Johannes Bugenhagen’s Educational Contributions” (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1974), as well as Hans Oppermann, *Die hamburgische Schulordnung Bugenhagens* (Hamburg, 1966).

⁴⁵ On the *Johanneum* in general, see Edmund Kelter, *Hamburg und sein Johanneum im Wandel der Jahrhunderte, 1529–1929* (Hamburg, 1929); still useful is Ernst Philipp Ludwig Calmberg’s *Geschichte des Johanneums zu Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1829).

program of the reformers.⁴⁶ Apart from daily exercises in the Lutheran catechism, students received a rigorous training in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, the latter two representing the “the sheath protecting the knife of the spirit,” as Luther himself had so bluntly put it.⁴⁷ Over the years, the *Johanneum* had produced an illustrious circle of graduates that helped spread its fame past the city walls of Hamburg. Among them were such talented scholars and literary figures as the Hebraist Esdras Edzardus (1629–1708)⁴⁸ and the poet Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680–1747).⁴⁹ So it must come as no surprise that during the seventeenth century, students from Hamburg had a reputation of surpassing many of their peers from other parts of the land.⁵⁰ But reputation notwithstanding, fame and skill came at a price. Every day from six-thirty until nine o’clock and from one o’clock until four,⁵¹ students as young as five and often as old as

46 Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, vol. 1, 203.

47 See Martin Luther, “An die Ratsherren aller Städte deutsches Lands, daß sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen,” in Luther, *Werke*, vol. 15 (Weimar, 1899), 38: “Die sprachen sind die scheyden, darynn dis messer des geysts stickt.”

48 Werner Puttfarken, ed., *Album Johannei*, part 1: *Einleitung: Schülerverzeichnis, 1529–1732* (Hamburg, 1929), 32, no. 268; on Esdras Edzardus, see Martin Friedrich, *Zwischen Abkehr und Bekehrung: Die Stellung der deutschen evangelischen Theologie zum Judentum im 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1988), 107–23.

49 See Puttfarken, *Album Johannei*, 25, no. 130; Hans-Dieter Loose, ed., *Barthold Heinrich Brockes (1680–1747): Dichter und Ratsherr in Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1980); Eckart Kleßmann, *Barthold Hinrich Brockes* (Hamburg, 2003); also Ferdinand van Ingen, “Barthold Heinrich Brockes. Ein Hamburger Dichter zwischen Barock und Aufklärung,” in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger and Sandra Richter (Berlin, 2012), 475–89.

50 In 1662, Johann Christian von Boineburg wrote to Hermann Conring: “Est paene indeles ac consuetudo Hamburgensibus, ut in literariis criticisque rebus supra alios emineant”; quoted in Kelter, *Hamburg und sein Johanneum*, 50.

51 Johann Klefeker, *Sammlung der Hamburgischen Gesetze und Verfassungen [. . .]*, vol. 6: *Der Sechste Theil in welchem die Verfassung des Gymnasiū und Johannei und der öffentlichen Stadt-Bibliothek . . . enthalten sind* (Hamburg, 1768), 92: “Es wird bey uns des Morgens dritthalb Stunden Schul gehalten, dergestalt, daß sowol zu Winters- als Sommers-Zeiten halber sieben der Anfang gemacht, um neun aber die Schüler erlassen werden [. . .]. Des Mittags wird drey Stunde Schul gehalten, sowohl den Winter als Sommer über, nemlich von eins bis vier Uhr.” Later, after Fabricius’s father-in-law Johann Schultze became headmaster, the school hours were changed; the new hours were from seven to eleven in the morning and from two to five in the afternoon. See Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, 172.

eighteen⁵² endured a rigorous regimen of drill, memorization, and examination. Including private lessons, but excluding preparation time and homework, students spent from Monday through Saturday an average of twenty hours per week in their benches,⁵³ learning the basics of Latin and Greek in the spirit of the humanists from previous centuries. Often they did so to an extent that drew scorn from some outraged parents to whom the traditional focus on the classics seemed increasingly outdated and worthless.⁵⁴ But the school did not yield, holding steadfastly to a curriculum that had produced such fine scholars as the famous philologist Lucas Holstenius (1596–1661), Vatican librarian and papal emissary.⁵⁵ From the first day they set foot in the school until the day they held their diplomas in their hands, students were living and breathing Latin and, to a lesser extent, Greek.⁵⁶

To be sure, the first two or three years were almost exclusively dedicated to building a vocabulary base and memorizing declensions and conjugations. Daily exercises in the *octava* and *septima*, for example, included the copying of short Latin phrases from the board, which they had to read out loud so that the instructor could correct pronunciation and stress.⁵⁷ While this procedure continued in the next grade level, the *sexta*, students encountered here for the first time the inflexion of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Not much different from what happens during a lesson in elementary Latin today, the teacher would write a noun on the board and call on a student to decline it, just as

⁵² Johann Bernhard Basedow, for example, attended the *prima* at the age of eighteen. See Armin Basedow, *Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724–1790): Neue Beiträge, Ergänzungen und Berichtigungen, zu seiner Lebensgeschichte* (Langensalza, 1924), 22–23.

⁵³ See Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 195–222.

⁵⁴ According to Calmberg, the public severely criticized what it perceived as an exaggerated focus on Latin and Greek in the curriculum: “Aber es erhoben sich auch noch von andern Seiten Stimmen, welche [die Schule] in einen nachtheiligen Ruf zu bringen suchten, nicht durch den Vorwurf vernachlässiger Zucht, sondern durch bittern Tadel des all-zugrossen Eifers, der auf Erlernung der griechischen und lateinischen Sprache verwandt würde”; see Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, 175.

⁵⁵ See Puttfarken, *Album Johannei*, 43, no. 515; on Holstenius, see Alfredo Serrai, *La biblioteca di Lucas Holstenius* (Udine, 2000); also Hans-Walter Stork, ed., *Lucas Holstenius (1596–1661): Ein Hamburger Humanist im Rom des Barock* (Husum, 2008).

⁵⁶ This “diploma” was a very general letter of reference by the headmaster. See Hans-Friedrich Bornitz, “Zur Vorgeschichte der Abiturprüfung in Hamburg,” in *450 Jahre Gelehrtenstschule des Johanneums zu Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1979), 52–53.

⁵⁷ Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 101: “Die halbe Stunde dazwischen lernen sie Buchstaben mahlen, also daß ihnen die Züge gewiesen werden. Sie werden auch im Schreiben dieser Gestalt geübt, daß sie einen teutschen oder lateinischen Spruch, der ihnen von dem Schreibmeister fürgeschrieben ist, bestes Fleisses nachahmen.”

he might ask a student to name the principal parts of a newly learned verb.⁵⁸ It was probably similar to what Karl Philipp Moritz (1756–1793) describes in his *Anton Reiser*:

He now had to begin learning the Donatus by heart, but he had a strange accent which was revealed right away in the second class when he had to recite the paradigm for *mensa* [...]. Now came the rote learning. *Amo, amas, amat* were recited in a singsong, and within six weeks he could tick off the forms of the impersonal verb *oportet*.⁵⁹

With class sizes ranging up to sixty or seventy students,⁶⁰ preceptors had little choice but to examine, correct, rebuke, and, not infrequently, humiliate pupils publicly.⁶¹ Such negative reinforcement, often part of a teacher's pedagogical arsenal, was not particularly helpful in creating a love of learning or of the teacher. Consequences of such public humiliation were often traumatic, as the case of Anton Reiser illustrates. After an apparently incorrect answer, the instructor exclaimed, "Stupid boy!" which would haunt him at times in the future,⁶² leaving him without much confidence in abilities that in fact he clearly possessed. Fear and drill, however, sooner or later yielded the desired

58 Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 86: "Im Sechsten Schulhauffen müssen sie die paradigmata flexionum, (Veränderungs-Exempel der Wörter) sowol die nach der Regel gehen, als die von der Regel abweichen, und im Donat vorhanden seyn, wol können, die Zufälle, damit die Veränderungs-Stücke unterschieden seyn, richtig wissen. Die themata (entzele Satzwörter) in verbis, (Sprechwörtern) in den nominibus (Namenwörtern) aber auch die Composita, das ist, welche aus zweyen zusammengesetzten Wörtern bestehen, ohne Anstoß flectiren, oder nach den Endungen verändern. In den verbis sollen sie die Formirung der temporum (Gezeiten) vom praeterito und supino, so ihnen ausgegeben, oder an die Tafel geschrieben seyn, hermachen können." For an inside view of a sixteenth-century classroom, see especially Anthony Grafton, "Teacher, Text and Pupil in the Renaissance Class-Room: A Case Study from a Parisian College," *History of Universities* 1 (1981), 37–70.

59 Karl Philipp Moritz, *Anton Reiser: A Psychological Novel*, ed. and trans. by John R. Russell (Columbia, s.c., 1996), 21; see Alexander Košenina, *Karl Philipp Moritz: Literarische Experimente auf dem Weg zum psychologischen Roman* (Göttingen, 2006).

60 See Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, 187.

61 Singling out students to examine them or correct their assignments was common practice, not only in Protestant schools. See, for example, April G. Shelford, *Transforming the Republic of Letters: Pierre-Daniel Huet and the European Intellectual Life, 1650–1720* (Rochester, N.Y., 2007), 21.

62 Moritz, *Anton Reiser*, 60: "Well, go on!" said the supervisor, and when this didn't happen, he looked at him in utter contempt and said, 'Stupid boy!'

result of having internalized forms and paradigms. By the time pupils such as Reimarus reached the next grade level, the *quinta*, they were ready for some “real life situations,” where they could display their recently acquired Latin skills. Rather than straining their own creativity, teachers could rely on a little book that had been successfully used in teaching conversational Latin to generations of scholars: Mathurin Cordier’s *Colloquia scholastica*. It contained forty dialogues, which increase in both length and level of grammatical difficulty. In the first dialogue, for example, we encounter two pupils, Abrahamus (A) and Bartholomaeus (B), who are engaged in the following conversation:⁶³

- A: Eamus una repetitum.
 B: Quid ego repeterem? Nonne satis est, quod solus repetiverim?
 A: Si tantum semel aut bis repetieris, id parum est ad ediscendum.
 B: Imo circiter decies repetivi.
 A: Ne id quidem sufficit.
 B: Quid igitur vis amplius?
 A: Si vis certissime reddere coram praceptor, opus est cum aliquo repetivisse.
 B: Istud ego nesciebam: sed tibi libenter assentior.
 A: Faciamus ergo, quod ego te monebam.
 B: Evidem non recuso: incipe.
- A: Let’s review together.
 B: What should I review? Is it not enough that I have reviewed already myself?
 A: If you have reviewed it once or twice, then this is too little to commit it to memory.
 B: I have reviewed it close to ten times.
 A: Even that is not enough!
 B: What more do you want?
 A: If you want to deliver it correctly to the teacher, it is necessary to review [it] with someone else.
 B: I did not know that; but I gladly assent.

63 Mathurin Cordier, *Colloquia scholastica* [...] studio atque opera Friderici Rombergii [...] (Frankfurt, 1723), 2; on the role of dialogues as a grammatical tool in language acquisition, see Karin Ehler and Martin Mulsow, “Vom galanten Umgang mit der Sprache. Sprachdidaktische Dialoge des 17. Jahrhunderts als Konversationsliteratur,” in *Geselligkeit und Gesellschaft im Barockzeitalter*, ed. Wolfgang Adam et al., vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1997), 581–95.

A: Let's then do what I told you.
 B: By all means, I don't object. Start.

Since most students probably did not own a copy of Cordier's book, it seems likely that the teacher wrote the dialogue on the board and explained words and forms that the students did not know. This probably happened in a question-and-answer format, where the teacher would call on students.⁶⁴ But we might obtain a better idea about how such a dialogue was used in a lesson in which Reimarus may have participated if we look at what the school regulations of the *Johanneum* state as course objectives:

[Students] should be able to respond correctly to questions regarding cases of [nouns and adjectives], which appear in the colloquia of Cordier. Word class and parts of speech should at times be disregarded [...]. They should also be able to change tense and person of the phrases and constructions that are taken from Cordier, and, once the teacher asks them, they should be capable of translating a portion [of it] from German into Latin and vice versa. They should translate the German constructions, which have been taken from [these] dialogues [...] into Latin in such a manner that they do not contradict the rules of grammar, which they have learned.⁶⁵

The teacher may then have reviewed the list of words that occurred in the dialogue and had students parse them. He may have requested students to name the principal parts of the verbs and determine the cases of the occurring nouns. It is also possible that the teacher asked simple questions about the plot in Latin and had students respond, which would have forced them to change person and case. Obviously this makes greater sense once the dialogues become longer and more complex. At that point, the dialogues may

⁶⁴ See Grafton, "Teacher, Text and Pupil," 39–43; also his *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 10–18.

⁶⁵ See Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 87–88: "Von den Zufällen der Wörter, die in den Gesprächen des Corderi fürlauffen, sollen sie richtig antworten können. Doch soll die species und figura zuweilen ausgenommen seyn [...]. Sie sollen auch die Formulen oder Arten zu reden, aus dem Cordero genommen, durch die tempora und personas verändern, und wann sie der Praeceptor fraget, die aufgegebene teutsche zu latein, und hinwieder die lateinischen zu teutsch geben können. Die teutschen Phrases (Redensarten) so aus den Gesprächen gezogen [...] sollen sie also zu latein machen können, daß sie in denselben Regeln der Grammatik, welche sie gelernet haben, sich nicht verstossen."

even have been used for a role-playing activity, where two students re-create a particular situation from memory, while the teacher interrupts them at times to highlight errors.

It remains unclear to what extent, or whether at all, Reimarus had to go through these motions while he attended the *Johanneum*. Without laws for compulsory schooling in place, it is hard to make general statements about the educational background of students.⁶⁶ In Hamburg, students from the nearby *Gymnasium illustre* often tutored children before they formally enrolled at the *Johanneum*. But even while they were taking classes, tutoring often continued.⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, the motivation, financial means, and the contacts of parents played a significant role in how advanced students were once they entered public schooling. Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791), for example, recalls that after barely half a year in first grade, he moved up to the next higher grade, because he had already received much of the instruction at home.⁶⁸ His mother had taught him poetry and songs, his father had him recite Aesop's *Fables*, and a few times per week his brother made him memorize Latin vocabulary.⁶⁹

It seems likely that Nicolaus Reimarus was equally involved in his son's education, especially since he himself was a teacher at the *Johanneum*. There is certainly a reason why Reimarus refers to his father as his first teacher of Latin and Greek.⁷⁰ Although Reimarus may have attended the *Johanneum* at a very young age, we should not conclude that he sat through every grade level. If he already knew Latin before he formally enrolled at the *Johanneum*, it seems

66 See Introduction above, note 16.

67 Johann Georg Büsch, *Erfahrungen*, vol. 4: *Ueber den Gang meines Geistes und meiner Tätigkeit* (Hamburg, 1794), 24: "In meinem neunten Jahre entzog mich mein Vater der Leseschule, und nahm einen jungen Mann, der das Hamburgische Gymnasium besuchte, als Privatlehrer ins Haus. Der Anfang im Latein war in der Leseschule gemacht. Dieser führte mich in die Grammatik einer Sprache, von der ich so äusserst wenig wußte, und ließ mich den Cellarius auswendig lernen."

68 Johann Salomo Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst abgefaßt*, vol. 1 (Halle, 1781), 23: "Ich verlies Quinta sehr bald, wie ich schon gesagt habe; denn meine liebe Mutter hatte mich so viel Lieder, Verse und Sprüche gelehret, daß ich hier selten etwas unbekanntes hörte; lateinische Vocabeln lernte ich ohnehin fast täglich zu Hause."

69 Ibid., 10: "Esopi Fabeln muste ich gar oft wieder erzählen; eine Anzahl lateinischer Vocabeln gab mir mein Bruder die Woche zwey bis dreymal auf, und wenn ich sie gut lernte, bekam ich von meinem Vater ein Lob über Tische, etwas geschenkt, oder durfte mit ihm spazieren gehen, da ich immer mehr Vocabeln lernte, und auf vorkommende Dinge schon anwendete. In dieser Kindheit, die ich bis ins sechste Jahr rechnen wil, fiel in unserm Hause gar nichts widriges vor."

70 See Introduction above, note 17.

unlikely that he would have had to endure the spelling exercises of the *octava*, *septima*, and *sexta*.⁷¹ He may in fact have started in the *quinta* or *quarta*.⁷² What we do know, however, is that Reimarus attended the highest grade, the *prima*, from 1708 until 1710, when he graduated at the age of fourteen. During these two years, he must have received instruction from Fabricius, who was then headmaster, from the deputy headmaster Paul Georg Krüsike (1641–1723), and possibly also from Joachim Völschovius (?–1709), the number three in line. Since, however, the *prima* was divided into a *coetus superior*, which was taught exclusively by the headmaster, and a *coetus inferior*, which was probably supervised by the deputy headmaster,⁷³ and Reimarus eventually became Fabricius's protégé, we can be quite certain that the latter was also his main teacher (Fig. 1).

The *Catalogus lectionum* provides us with an approximate idea of the material that was covered in this course. In his first semester with Fabricius as his teacher, the fourteen-year-old Reimarus might have read the first eighteen chapters of the book of Genesis in Hebrew, worked through the first thirteen articles of Hutter's *Compendium locorum theologicorum*, read sections from Cicero's *De officiis*, and performed various exercises in Latin style and rhetoric. Privately, Fabricius would practice with his students how to imitate the style of Latin authors from every possible genre, have them read Cicero again *ad nauseam*, and introduce them to Aelian's *Varia historia* in Greek.⁷⁴ The next

⁷¹ H.S. Reimarus's son, Johann Albert Hinrich, for example, recalls that he started at the *Johanneum* in the *quinta* at the age of six: "Was nun meinen Unterricht betrifft, so ward ich im sechsten Jahre der fünften Klasse unserer acht Klassen langen Johannis-Schule übergeben"; see J.A.H. Reimarus, *Lebensbeschreibung*, 2.

⁷² Unless they were promoted, teachers kept their assigned grade level *ad infinitum*. Carl Mönckeberg suggests that Nicolaus Reimarus kept his son for an unusually long period in his *quarta*. This seems to be incorrect, because the *Catalogus lectionum* names Michael Engelhard as *praeceptor quartae classis* in 1708. Nicolaus Reimarus took over this grade level only in 1709, when Engelhard became *praeceptor tertiae classis*. Since the *Catalogus lectionum* only sporadically lists the names of the teacher for each grade level, we can only assume that until his promotion, Nicolaus Reimarus taught the *quinta*. See *Catalogus lectionum et exercitationum, quae in Johanneo Hamburgensi, per proxime elapsam aestatem habitae, postea publico examini & superiorum judicio, anno M. DCC. VIII. mensis octobris diebus XVI. & XVII. consuetis, ante & post meridiem, horis, debita ac sincera fide subjicienda sunt ...* (Hamburg, 1708), 10* (unpaginated); cf. Carl Mönckeberg, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und Johann Christian Edelmann* (Hamburg, 1867), 14.

⁷³ See Calmberg, *Geschichte des Johanneums*, 120.

⁷⁴ See *Catalogus lectionum et exercitationum, quae in Johanneo Hamburgensi ... anno M. DCC. VIII. mensis octobris diebus XVI. & XVII., 1–2**: "Facto identidem a sacris initio, in commissa sibi opera ita versatus est, ut in *Hebraicis* prima XVIII. Genesos capita absolvitur, in *Compendio Hutteri* explicando pervenerit usque ad locum Praedestinatione [...].



FIGURE 1 *Portrait of Johann Albert Fabricius (1668–1736) by Johann Salomon Wahl, [ca. 1718]*
PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO BY CHRISTOPH IRRGANG, COLOGNE 2004.
COURTESY OF HINRICH SIEVEKING, MUNICH.

two years would bring more Hebrew, more Aelian, even more Cicero, in addition to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Pliny's *Epistles*.⁷⁵ But if the material seemed more sophisticated than the dull memorization exercises from the lower grade levels, the mode of instruction and the atmosphere in the classroom did not necessarily change significantly. Sentences were read over and over again,⁷⁶ and students were often ridiculed in front of their peers if they failed to respond correctly. Looking back at his time in the *prima* of the *Johanneum*, the economist Johann Georg Büsch (1728–1800)⁷⁷ still remembered vividly an instance when his headmaster returned an assignment to the class:

Before he gave them back, he pulled from the pile one of the booklets, which I quickly recognized as mine. He explained how good it was to know that there were students in the classroom capable of writing in a Latin style where the words were walking on stilts; he then said something about obscurity and self-adulation and eventually read my paper aloud. Everybody laughed [...]; when he had finished reading it, he called me out to pick up the booklet and under the laughter of my classmates, he made me walk the entire way between my bench up to him and

In *Cicerone* denique interpretatus sit librum primum officiorum cum secundo dimidio [...]. *Exercitia styli & rhetorica* quothebdomadis publice proposuit emendavitque quatera, (1) *Germanicum* latine reddendum, selecto semper utili quodam arguento [...]. (2) *Latinum* in insignem locum veteris cuiusdam scriptoris, reddendum Germanice. (3) *Epistolae, vel variationis, amplificationis* Rhetoricae exemplum imitatione exprimendum. (4) *Chiriam* ex sententia aliqua Ciceronis quae inter interpretandum nobis offerebat. Privatim in triplici styli latini genere totidem pulcherrimos scriptores Auditoribus proposuit in exemplum quos imitarentur, interpretatus est [...]. In *Graecis, Aeliani* unum alterumque librum Variarum Historiarum explicit [...].”

75 Catalogus lectionum et exercitationum, quae in Johanneo Hamburgensi ... anno M. DCC. x. mensis octobris diebus XVI. & XVII... (Hamburg, 1710), 3–4*: “[...] interpretatus sit in Hebraicis capita Geneseos viginti [...] ex optimo dicendi Magistro Cicerone libros sex Epistolarum ad diversos absolverit [...] Orationes quasdam Ciceronis, Epistolarum Plinii libros quinque, & totidem ex Metamorphosi Ovidiana. In Graecis, ex Aeliani Variis Historiis libros tres, sententiasque [...]”

76 Büsch, *Ueber den Gang meines Geistes*, 78: “Das schlimmste von allem war der elende Unterricht unseres Correctors [...]. Lateinische Schriftsteller wurden so gelesen, daß der erste in der Bank eine Periode laut übersetzte. Dann hieß es: repete, bis die ganze Bank durchgenommen war. Dann kauete die folgende Bank eine zweite Periode durch, und so fortan, ohne daß der Lehrer nur Ein Wort zur nützlichen Erläuterung angefügt hätte [...]”

77 On Büsch, see Frank Hatje, “Johann Georg Büsch (1728–1800): Professor academicus et extra-academicus,” in *Das Akademische Gymnasium: Bildung und Wissenschaft in Hamburg, 1613–1883*, ed. Dirk Brietzke et al. (Berlin and Hamburg, 2013), 109–37.

back. I can hardly describe the resentment that grew in me from this experience.⁷⁸

It seems unlikely, however, that Fabricius was prone to deliver such treatment. His own credibility would have seriously suffered if he had not lived up to what he preached.⁷⁹ But even Fabricius's mentorship knew its limits. The more gifted and talented students probably received more of his attention than others. Such favoritism must also have impacted a student's standing among his classmates as well as his self-confidence. Poor Anton Reiser's respect among his peers, for example, slumped completely once he had fallen from grace as the headmaster's *famulus* and was unable to distinguish himself during lessons so that he would be allowed to sit in one of the front rows.⁸⁰ Reimarus was probably spared from such painful experience. He did not attend the *prima* beyond the required minimum of two years,⁸¹ which suggests that he was well prepared for his future course of study. Most of all, Fabricius showed continued interest in him—to the extent that many years later he would accept him as a son-in-law.

78 Ibid., 82–83: “Eines Tages kam mein Rector mit seinem Stoß von Exercitienbüchern in die Schule. Vor deren Asteilung zog er ein Buch hervor, das ich bald für das meinige erkannte. Es ist doch gut, sagte er, daß man wisse, was man für Mitschüler habe, die ein Latein schreiben, in dem jedes Wort auf Stelzen geht; sprach noch viel von Dünkel und Einbildung, und las nun mein Exercitium laut vor. Alles lachte [...]; wie er es verlesen hatte, rief er meinen Namen auf, um das Buch zu empfangen und nöhtigte mich, den langen Weg aus meiner Bank bis zu ihm unter lauter Gelächter meiner Mitschüler hin und her zu gehen. Ich kann die Erbitterung nicht beschreiben, die daraus bei mir erwuchs.”

79 In his lectures at the *Gymnasium illustre*, Fabricius specifically emphasized that the less-gifted could equally acquire scholarly merits through diligence and hard work: “Innumeris enim exemplis constat, pauperes quidem mediocri vi ingenii praeditos, sed probos, modestos, officiosos adolescentes improbo labore et assiduo studio ad sublime eruditionis fastigium et summas dignitates pervenisse.” See Johann Albert Fabricius, *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Ms. Thott 1170 (b) 4º, 19–20.

80 Karl Philipp Moritz, *Werke*, ed. Heide Hollmer et al., vol. 1: *Anton Reiser. Ein Psychologischer Roman* (Frankfurt, 1998), 247–53: “Als er nehmlich die Prima besuchte, so hörte er schon zuweilen hinter sich zischeln: sieh, das ist des Rektors Famulus!—Eine Benennung, mit welcher Reiser den allerniedrigsten Begriff verband [...]. Das Betragen des Direktors gegen Reiser war eine Folge von dessen schüchternem und mißtrauischen Wesen, das seine niedrige Seele zu verraten schien [...]. Dieser war nun einmal in der Achtung seiner Mitschüler gesunken [...] jeder wollte seinen Witz an ihm üben [...]. Wo sollte nun wohl bei ihm ein rühmlicher Wetteifer, Fleiß und Lust zum eigentlichen Studieren herkommen?”

81 Puttfarken, *Album Johannei*, 58, no. 836.

At the Feet of Polyhistors: The World of Scholarship and Learning in a “Nutshell”

Certain cities, including Hamburg, offered students a taste of what they would most likely encounter in their future courses of study in locally governed institutions of higher learning, which, unlike universities, were not allowed to grant degrees.⁸² These *gymnasia illustria* were much smaller than most universities. With its five or six faculty members in total,⁸³ the *Gymnasium illustre* of Hamburg, for example, was only about half the size of the department of theology at the University of Wittenberg.⁸⁴ Instituted in 1613,⁸⁵ the *Gymnasium* was above all intended to facilitate a student's transition from the dread and drill of the *Johanneum* to the lofty spheres of higher learning.⁸⁶ It

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- 82 Arno Seifert, “Das höhere Schulwesen: Universitäten und Gymnasien,” in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, vol. 1: 15. bis 17. Jahrhundert. Von der Renaissance und der Reformation bis zum Ende der Glaubenskämpfe, ed. Notker Hammerstein (Munich, 1996), 292–312; Willem Frijhoff, “Patterns,” in *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 2: *Universities in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (New York, 1996), 52. See also Frijhoff, “L’École illustre,” in *Orbis doctus, 1500–1850. Perspectieven op de geleerde wereld van Europa: plaatse en personen. Opstellen aangeboden aan professor dr. J.A.H. Bots*, ed. Guillaume van Germert et al. (Amsterdam, 2005), 67–88; and Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrtenden Unterrichts*, vol. 1, 328–30; also Dirk van Miert, “The Long Life of the Humanist Tradition: The Amsterdam Athenaeum Illustre in the Golden Age,” *History of Universities* 21, no. 2 (2006), 1–76; as well as Dirk van Miert’s excellent book on the Amsterdam *Athenaeum Illustre*, entitled *Humanism in an Age of Science: The Amsterdam Athenaeum in the Golden Age, 1632–1704* (Leiden, 2009).
- 83 See Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 55: “[...] im Jahre 1675 [...] wurde die Anzahl bis auf sechs Professores erweitert [...]”
- 84 See Heinz Kathe, *Die Wittenberger Philosophische Fakultät, 1502–1817* (Cologne, 2002), 275–76.
- 85 See Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 45: “Das Jahr 1613 ist das eigentliche Stiftungsjahr des Hamburgischen Gymnasii, und der 12te August desselben Jahrs ist der Tag, an welchem dasselbe öffentlich und feierlich eingeweihet worden ist”; see Franklin Kopitzsch, “Die Anfänge des Akademischen Gymnasiums in Hamburg,” in *Das Akademische Gymnasium*, ed. Brietzke et al., 15–30.
- 86 The illustrious Petrus Lambecius, one-time headmaster of the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg, explains the purpose of the *Gymnasium* as follows: “Scholae enim triviales Gymnasiorum, & Gymnasia Academiarum seminaria sunt, adeoque arcta inter haec Collegia est cognatio, ut a salute scholarum trivialium salus Gymnasiorum, & a Gymnasiorum salute salus dependeat Academiarum. Quippe in scholis prima jaciuntur eruditiois fundamenta, in Gymnasiis ad aedificium, positis jam fundamentis superstruendum, materia convehitur & contignatur, in Academiis ultima accedit manus & fastigium operi imponitur. Quare si in scholis non ponatur solidum fundamentum, nec in

was also a response to socioeconomic and theological concerns. Until then, many *Johanneum* graduates from Hamburg and the surrounding areas customarily flocked to the *gymnasia illustria* of nearby Stade or Bremen to receive finishing touches there. Bremen, however, was a particular matter of concern to Lutheran orthodoxy because it had a reputation of promoting crypto-Calvinism. So what could be a better reason to establish an institution of higher learning than keeping the souls of Lutheran youth untainted and safe within the protective walls of Lutheran learning?⁸⁷ Even though the *Johanneum* was the older of the two institutions and initially the more prestigious,⁸⁸ by the time Reimarus became a student at the *Gymnasium* in 1711, the latter was already outshining it. Partly responsible for its glory was the illustrious circle of teachers whose influence reached beyond the city walls to even remote corners of the *Respublica literaria*.⁸⁹ Names such as Joachim Jungius (1587–1657),⁹⁰

Gymnasisis idonea convehatur materia & probe contignetur, totum, quod in Academis absolvitur, aedificium infirmum est & ruinae obnoxium," in Petrus Lambecius, *Orationes et Programmata* (Hamburg, 1711), 90.

- 87 Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 46: "Die nächste Veranlassung zu dieser öffentlichen Entschliessung scheinet diese gewesen zu seyn, daß viele von den jungen Studirenden aus Hamburg sich bewogen gefunden hatten, die Gymnasia zu Bremen und Stade zu besuchen [...]. Weil nun dieses zu einer Zeit sehr häufig geschahe, da einige auswärtige Lehrer den Verdacht der Heterodoxie auf sich geladen hatten: so glaubten die Hamburgischen Theologen, daß sie daher zu besorgenden Gefahr ihre Wachsamkeit entgegen setzen müßten. Die Empfehlung einer eigenen Veranstaltung eines erweiterten und höheren Unterrichts in den Wissenschaften schiene ihnen das sicherste Verwahrungsmittel zu seyn"; also Otto Rüdiger, *Geschichte des Hamburgischen Unterrichtswesens* (Hamburg, 1896), 23–24.
- 88 During the 1620s, before Joachim Jungius took over as headmaster, there were even demands to close the *Gymnasium illustre* again, partly due to a lack of students, partly to use available resources exclusively for the *Johanneum*. See Valentin Wudrian, *Hochwichtige und denkliche Ursachen/ Warum das Gymnasium oder Studenten-Schulen in der weitberühmten Stadt Hamburg nicht abzuschaffen/ sondern vielmehr zu erhalten und zu verbessern sey* (Hamburg, 1624).
- 89 Martin Mulsow, "Entwicklung einer Tatsachenkultur: Die Hamburger Gelehrten und ihre Praktiken, 1650–1750," in *Hamburg. Eine Metropole zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, ed. Steiger and Richter, 45–63.
- 90 Martin Rothkegel, ed., *Der Briefwechsel des Joachim Jungius* (Göttingen, 2005); Christoph Meinel, *Die Bibliothek des Joachim Jungius: Ein Beitrag zur Historia litteraria der frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1992); Gottschalk E. Guhrauer, *Joachim Jungius und sein Zeitalter: nebst Goethe's Fragmenten über Jungius* (Stuttgart, 1850); more recently, see Christoph Meinel, "Wissenschafts- und Schulreform aus dem Geist der Naturforschung. Joachim Jungius' 'Syndikritische Methode,'" in *Das Akademische Gymnasium*, ed. Brietzke et al., 31–46.

Peter Lambecius (1628–1680),⁹¹ Aegidius Gutbier (1617–1667),⁹² or Vincent Placcius (1642–1699)⁹³ had a familiar ring to intellectuals in Jena, Leipzig, or Wittenberg, just as they did to those in London, Paris, or Vienna. The teachers Reimarus encountered were no less distinguished than their famous colleagues from the previous century. Aside from Placcius's successor Fabricius,⁹⁴ who had taken up the professorship of eloquence and moral philosophy after the latter's death in April 1699 and whose reputation eclipsed those of his colleagues, several of the remaining faculty members would equally have added some splendor to any institution of higher learning in the country. Among them were men such as the quarrelsome Sebastian Edzardus (1672–1736),⁹⁵ who had taken up arms against such formidable opponents as the notorious Arminian scholar Jean Le Clerc (1657–1736)⁹⁶ and who was ready to bequeath his battle-tested experience to his eager students, and, only recently, the future

91 Gebhard König, "Lambeck, Peter," *NDB* 13 (1982), 426–27; also his "Peter Lambeck (1628–1680)," *Bibliothekar Kaiser Leopolds I.*, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 87 (1979), 121–66.

92 Ernst Kelchner, "Aegidius Gutbier" in *ADB* 10 (1879), 215–16; also Christian Conrad Georg Behrmann, *Hamburgs Orientalisten* (Hamburg, 1902), 32–34.

93 "Vincent Placcius," in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, vol. 6 (1873), 60–66; Martin Mulsow, "Practices of Unmasking: Polyhistorians, Correspondence, and the Birth of Dictionaries of Pseudonymity in Seventeenth-Century Germany," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67 (2006), 219–50.

94 Erik Petersen, *Johann Albert Fabricius: en Humanist i Europa*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1998). See Ralph Häfner: "Philologische Festkultur in Hamburg im ersten Drittel des 18. Jahrhunderts: Fabricius, Brockes, Telemann," in *Philologie und Erkenntnis: Beiträge zu Begriff und Problem frühneuzeitlicher Philologie* (Tübingen, 2001), 349–78; "Literaturgeschichte und Physikotheologie. Johann Albert Fabricius," in *500 Jahre Theologie in Hamburg: Hamburg als Zentrum christlicher Theologie und Kultur zwischen Tradition und Zukunft*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger (New York, 2005), 35–57; and "Literarische Zimelien: Aspekte der Literaturkritik in Johann Albert Fabricius' Edition der Werke des französischen Protestant Paul Colomiès," in *Historia literaria: Neuordnungen des Wissens im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Friedrich Vollhart et al. (Berlin, 2007), 213–30. See also Sabine Volk-Birke, "Naturwissenschaft, Philologie und Andacht: Johann Albert Fabricius' Übersetzung von William Derhams Astrotheology und Physicotheology," in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, ed. Steiger and Richter, 827–44.

95 "Sebastian Edzardus," in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, vol. 2 (1854), 135–47; for a taste of Edzardus's polemics, see Daniel Bellingradt, *Flugpublizistik und Öffentlichkeit um 1700: Dynamiken, Akteure und Strukturen im urbanen Raum des Alten Reiches* (Stuttgart, 2011), 176.

96 Sebastian Edzardus, *Jacobi Patriarchae de Schiloh vaticinium a depravatione Johannis Clerici, in Pentateuchum Commentatoris [...]* (London, 1698).

master bibliographer of Hebraica, a still very young Johann Christoph Wolf, had been hired as another promising addition.

What was it like for Reimarus to be a student at the *Gymnasium*? First of all, unlike the drill of the *Johanneum*, the atmosphere at the *Gymnasium* appears to have been much more civil. It more closely resembled a university, where a schoolmaster's unruly whip would have seemed out of place. Johann Georg Büsch, formerly one of Reimarus's students at the *Gymnasium* and later a faculty member himself, recalls from his own student days how

the *Gymnasium* [was] entirely academic in its setup, save that the higher faculties were not taught there [...]. The coherent presentation of a professor who lectures without interruption for one whole hour solely about one specific subject is something so different and striking for a young man who just came from the discontinuous mode of instruction of a school that he is completely captivated at first and easily becomes enthralled by the instructor's words.⁹⁷

Increased respect toward students manifested itself even in the attire they were permitted to wear, which would generally include cloak and sword, as was equally customary at any institution of higher learning.⁹⁸ This also seemed very appropriate, as the *Gymnasium* was primarily populated by students who had plans to continue their academic journey at Halle, Jena, Wittenberg, or any other university in the country.⁹⁹

The professors themselves were more scholars than disciplinarians. With the exception of the headmaster, whose position rotated annually among faculty members and who was granted one period less a week of teaching duties,

⁹⁷ Büsch, *Ueber den Gang meines Geistes und meiner Tätigkeit*, 109–10: “Dies Gymnasium ist ganz akademisch nach seiner Einrichtung, nur daß keine Fakultäten-Wissenschaften auf demselben vorgetragen werden [...]. In den zusammenhängenden Vorträgen eines Lehrers, der eine Stunde lang allein über eine Kenntnis fortredet, ist etwas so unterscheidendes und auffallendes für den Jüngling, der aus dem abgebrochenen Schul-Unterricht dazu gelangt, daß er dadurch zu Anfang ganz hingerissen wird, und das pendere ab ore magistri gar leicht entsteht.”

⁹⁸ William Norman Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academic Dress in Europe until the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1963).

⁹⁹ Thomas O. Achelis, “Hamburger Studenten in Jena, 1548–1850, in Helmstedt 1574–1636, in Wittenberg 1602–1812, in Kiel 1665–1865 und in Halle 1690–1775,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 31 (1930), 23–86; Percy E. Schramm, “Die von den Hamburgern bevorzugten Universitäten (Ende des 17. bis Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts),” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 52 (1966), 83–90.

each professor was required to teach four times each week.¹⁰⁰ Aside from these public teaching obligations, they also held private lessons or lectures at their own homes, for which students had to pay individually and which thus added an attractive component for instructors, whose salaries by no means matched their scholarly reputation and skill.¹⁰¹ These private lectures were generally also open for an interested public.¹⁰² As Hamburg was a port city, commerce and trade played an important role and, not surprisingly, professors offered additional courses in mathematics or physics that were geared toward the demands of local merchants and tradesmen. For the academic year 1712–13, Reimarus's “junior year,” Balthasar Mentzer (1651–1727), professor of mathematics, announced that he would teach privately a *collegium curiosum*, in which he would “demonstrate the use of the air-pump, the *laterna magica*, the *camera obscura*, and the magnet needle with cylinders, prisms, [and] mirrors.”¹⁰³ But the administration was careful to monitor these private teaching activities. A professor was allowed to schedule a course only if the suggested topic did not interfere with the expertise of a colleague and only in the afternoon, once the mandatory public lectures had ended.¹⁰⁴ In practice, this meant that professors could officially schedule private lectures only after four in the afternoon because the morning hours from seven until ten and the afternoon hours

¹⁰⁰ Klefeker, *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 56–57: “Ein ieder Professor lehret wöchentlich 4 Stunden öffentlich in dem Auditorio des Gymnasii, und was iedes Jahr hindurch sowohl öffentlich als besonders gelehret worden, davon wird jährlich im Monat März ein so genannter *Index publice privatimque actorum & agendorum* auf öffentliche Unkosten gedruckt und ausgetheilet.”

¹⁰¹ On teaching practices, see van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science*, 115–66.

¹⁰² On the subject of private teaching, see the brief treatment in Paul Nelles, “*Historia litteraria* at Helmstedt: Books, Professors and Students in the Early Enlightenment University,” in *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Martin Mulsow et al. (Tübingen, 2001), 159–60; also van Miert, “The Long Life of the Humanist Tradition,” 16.

¹⁰³ See *Catalogus paelectionum et exercitiorum quae in Gymnasio Hamburgensi inde a verno initio A.C. MDCCXI usque ad veris initium MDCCXII publice et privatim fuerunt habita quaeque deinceps annuo spatio usque ad idem initium proxime sequuturi anni MDCCXIII. I.N.J.C. habebuntur* (Hamburg, 1712), Sta HH, A 559/8, 8* (unpaginated): “Atque, ut desiderio Nonnullorum satis fiat, *Collegium* simul *Curiosum* aperiet, in quo varia monstrabit experimenta per Antliam Pneumaticam, Laternam Magicam, Cameram Obscuram, Acum magneticam per Cylindros, prismata, specula &c.”

¹⁰⁴ The school regulations state it as follows: “[...] sollen, so oft [die Professores] ein privatum Collegium wollen anstellen, solches ohne des Rectoris Gymnasii und andern Professoren Bewilligung nich zu Werke richten, auch keine ordinariam horam dazu nehmen”; printed in Johann Klefeker, *Sammlung der Hamburgischen Gesetze und Verfassungen [...], vol. 8: Achte Theil in welchem der Kirchlichen Verfassungen gesammte Abtheilungen... begriffen sind* (Hamburg, 1770), 480.

between one and four were reserved for regular public teaching obligations. Teaching days were Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, while Wednesday and Saturday were exclusively reserved for student disputations and speeches or to schedule make-up units.¹⁰⁵

The extent to which these strict parameters were maintained in practice remains somewhat unclear. According to the *Catalogus paelectionum et exercitiorum*, a specific daily time slot was allotted to each professor for his public teaching duties. This rarely changed over the years. During the year 1710–11, for example, Fabricius taught two public courses per week, each “ab hora tertia pomeridiana in quartam” [from the third period in the afternoon until the fourth]. His colleague Sebastian Edzardus taught weekly courses in logic and metaphysics always “ab hora nona in decima” [from the ninth to the tenth period], and the physician Johannes Müller (1651–1724)¹⁰⁶ taught his courses in physics and poetics always “ab hora septima in octava” [from the seventh to the eighth period].¹⁰⁷ Since the day began with the “hora prima” at six o’clock in the morning, this would mean that for the entire period when Reimarus was a student at the *Gymnasium*, public lectures were scheduled mainly in the afternoon. We also know, however, that professors spent between six to ten hours per day teaching and preparing for lessons. After teaching at his alma mater for close to thirty years, Reimarus confessed to his later benefactor Angelo Maria Querini¹⁰⁸ that his physical ailments seriously interfered with his scholarly endeavors because he needed to regain his strength after “spending six hours every day instructing students,”¹⁰⁹ and we know from Reimarus

¹⁰⁵ “Des Mon- Diens- und Freytages, als diebus ordinariis, soll des Morgens, beyde Sommers und Winters, von 7 bis 10, und Nachmittags von 1 bis 4 inclusive, und also iede Woche von ieden Professoren viermal, von dem Rectore aber nur dreymal publice gelesen, eine Stunde lectioni theologicae reserviret werden. Des Mittwochens und Sonnabends, als diebus extraordinariis, sollen die Disputationes und Declamationes [...] gehalten, auch an denselbigen Tagen, wann keine Disputationes oder Declamationes seyn, da einer von den Professoren eine Stunde ohne Ehehaft versäumet, alsdann der Mangel ersetzet werden”; in *ibid.*, 479.

¹⁰⁶ “Johannes Müller,” in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, vol. 5 (1870), 427–28.

¹⁰⁷ *Catalogus paelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCX usque ad veris initium MDCCXI publice et privatim fuerunt habita quaeque deinceps annuo spatio usque ad idem initium proxime sequuturi anni MDCCXII habebuntur* (Hamburg, 1711), StA HH, A 559/8, 2–5* (unpaginated).

¹⁰⁸ On Reimarus’s exchange with Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini, see Ulrich Groetsch, “Reimarus, the Cardinal, and the Remaking of Cassius Dio’s *Roman History*,” in *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Martin Mulsow (New York, 2011), 103–57.

¹⁰⁹ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 4 July 1743, vqs. Ms. 257: “[...] praesertim, cum ea sit suscepti muneris prope dixerim miserrima conditio, ut instituendae iuventuti senas quotidie

that Fabricius had devoted ten hours daily to his lectures during the first two decades of his teaching career.¹¹⁰

It is also not clear to what extent private lectures were always announced in the *Catalogus paelectionum*. In his letter to Wolf from Jena, Reimarus fondly recalls the philosophy lectures that his mentor Wolf held at the *Gymnasium illustre*. Wolf, however, started teaching at the *Gymnasium* only in 1712, which means that Reimarus could at most have taken courses with him during the ensuing two years. But the *Catalogus paelectionum* does not mention that Wolf offered any courses in philosophy. This mystery is solved if we listen again to Johann Georg Büsch's recollections as a student of Reimarus at the *Gymnasium* some thirty years after his teacher was a student there:

His principal field of instruction was Oriental languages [...]. But Reimarus was more successful with me in his philosophy lecture. After the death of a participant, I had to plead for admittance to this most private circle, where he lectured to a select few.¹¹¹

So it is very likely that during Reimarus's own student days, professors taught private courses to a select circle of students in whom they saw great promise, often during the morning hours and without having them recorded or announcing them in the *Catalogus paelectionum*. From his letter to Wolf we may very well conclude that Reimarus had caught the latter's attention and favor as early as his student days in Hamburg, most likely when he was taking one of the courses listed in the *Catalogus paelectionum*. Since Reimarus was already in his second year at the *Gymnasium* by the time Wolf took over

horas tribuere, et reliquum fere omne tempus in recuperandis viribus exhaustis conterere necesse sit."

¹¹⁰ "Memini vero eum, ut exemplo mihi suo animum ad laborem adderet saepiuscule dicere, se primo muneris sui decennio decem fere quotidie horas docuisse, altero pariter decennio, modo decem modo novem aut octo horas impendisse paelectionibus, tertio etiam decennio non destitisse septem ad octo horas juventuti tribuere; donec quarto decennio sensus virium decrescentium jussisset quinque quatuorve horis se continere, & ut frequenter ajebat, laborem ad juniores semet ultro transmittere"; see Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *De vita et scriptis Joannis Alberti Fabricii commentarius* [...] (Hamburg, 1736), 32.

¹¹¹ Büsch, *Ueber den Gang meines Geistes und meiner Tätigkeit*, 122–23: "Der Gegenstand seines Amtes waren bekanntlich die Orientalischen Sprachen [...]. Reimarus besseres Verdienst um mich erwarb er sich durch seinen Vortrag der Philosophie. Ich mußte mich in das Privatissimum, in welchem er sie für eine geschlossene Zahl las, erst nach dem Tode eines der Zuhörer einbitten."

the professorship of Hebrew and Oriental languages, he probably no longer needed to take any of the courses in introductory Hebrew with him. By then, he may have already taken them with Wolf's predecessor, Johann Friedrich Winckler (1679–1738),¹¹² a former student of the founder of Ethiopic studies Hiob Ludolf (1624–1704),¹¹³ or even with Georg Eliezer Edzardus (1661–1727),¹¹⁴ under whom Wolf had studied Arabic.¹¹⁵ More likely is that Reimarus read a selection of rabbinic commentaries with Wolf on the book of Isaiah,¹¹⁶ struggled under his guidance through the intricacies of the *Peshitta*,¹¹⁷ or sat during his “senior year” in Wolf’s course on textual criticism, where they used August Pfeiffer’s *Critica sacra* as a textbook.¹¹⁸ But Reimarus could not have been in better hands for this kind of work. Wolf was only in his late twenties upon his return to his alma mater in Hamburg, and with his own academic experiences from Wittenberg still fresh in his mind, he was a gifted teacher, academic counselor, and confidant all in one. Although still a far cry from the deft and

¹¹² See “Johann Friedrich Winckler,” in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, vol. 8 (1883), 86–89.

¹¹³ Jack Fellman, “Founders of Ethiopic Studies: Job Ludolf (1624–1704) and August Dillman (1823–1894),” *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 39 (2002), 207–11.

¹¹⁴ See Mönckeberg, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und Johann Christian Edelmann*, 14; in addition to Sebastian Edzardus (see notes 95 and 96 above), his brother Georg Eliezer Edzardus was also teaching at the *Gymnasium illustre*; see “Georg Eliezer Edzardus,” in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, vol. 2 (1854), 129–30.

¹¹⁵ See Johann Heinrich von Seelen, *Vita, Scriptis [...] Ioan. Christoph. Wolfii [...], 2–3*: “In addiscendis linguis orientalibus facem ei praetulit B. Anckelmannus, speciatim in Arabica Georg. El. Edzardus, ad quem etiam Graeca & Historiam proponentem sedulo accessit.”

¹¹⁶ See Wolf’s entry in the *Catalogus preelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXII usque ad veris initium MDCCIII publice et privatis fuerunt habita [...]* (Hamburg, 1713), StA HH, A 559/8, 7* (unpaginated): “Cumque non deessent, qui, analogias Linguae Sanctae satis gnari, ad legendas Rabbinorum commentationes idonei viderentur, horum conatus provecturus cum Jesaiae explicatione literali lectionem & interpretationem commentarii selectioris, quem מכלל יופי inscrisit auctor, conjunxit.”

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 8*: “Iisdem ducem se preebuit ad Syriacam Linguam ex preeceptis Grammaticis B. Opitii & ipsa versione Novi Foederis Syriaca, cuius lectionem cum illis mature conjunxit, hauriendam.”

¹¹⁸ See *Catalogus [...] initio A.C. MDCCXIII usque ad veris initium MDCCIV publice et privatis fuerunt [...]* (Hamburg, 1715), StA HH, A 559/8, 7*: “[...] superiore anno in publicis preelectionibus binas per hebdomadem horas Criticae Sacrae, duce Pfeiffero τῷ μακρίτῃ, explicandae ita impedit, ut, commemoratis primum diversi generis, qui huc spectant, Scriptoribus, capita ea, quae ad *Partitiones, Editiones, Linguasque Originales Sacri C. dictis utriusque Foederis, Puritatem Fontium, Interpretationem Scripturae Sacrae ac denique Masoram* pertinent, succincte interpretaretur.”

masterful compiler of the massive four-volume *Bibliotheca Hebraea*,¹¹⁹ he had already tested that territory in a slim little booklet entitled *Historia lexicorum Hebraicorum*,¹²⁰ in which he provided a skillful survey of Hebrew lexicography and grammar.

While Wolf was well on the road to scholarly fame, following in the footsteps of the great Italian bibliographer Giulio Bartolocci (1613–1687),¹²¹ Fabricius was already there and ready to share his wisdom with his students. Despite his massive publication enterprises, countless review requests in the renowned *Acta eruditorum*, and administrative duties, he nonetheless spent ten hours each day preparing lectures and teaching students.¹²² As professor of eloquence and ethics, he was regularly teaching courses in natural law in which he demonstrated its “harmony with the teachings of Christian moral theology.”¹²³ In addition, he introduced students to the *Noctes Atticae* of Aulus Gellius,¹²⁴ and, in a quasi-countdown to the big day, he prepared advanced students in his *practicum oratorium* for their lofty public-speaking performance in front of faculty, students, and administrators.¹²⁵ Students

¹¹⁹ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea, sive notitia tum auctorum Hebr. cujuscunque aetatis, tum scriptorum, quae vel Hebraice primum exarata vel ab aliis conversa sunt, at nostram aetatem deducta*, 4 vols. (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1715–33).

¹²⁰ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Historia Lexicorum Hebraicorum, quae tam a Judaeis quam Christianis nostra usque tempora in lucem vel edita, vel promissa sunt* [...] (Wittenberg, 1705).

¹²¹ Saverio Campanini, “Wege in die Stadt der Bücher. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hebräischen Bibliographie: die katholische bibliographische ‘Dynastie’ Iona- Bartolocci- Imbonati,” in *Reuchlin und seine Erben: Forscher, Denker, Ideologen und Spinner*, ed. Peter Schäfer et al. (Ostfildern, 2005), 61–76.

¹²² See Introduction above, note 19.

¹²³ *Catalogus praelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXII usque ad veris initium MDCCIII publice et privatim fuerunt [...] (Hamburg, 1713), StA HH, A 559/8, 6 *:* “[...] superiore Anno in praelectionibus publicis, die Lunae ac Martis per primum quadrimestre summa Juris Naturalis capita perfecturus, demonstravit Concordiam ejusdem cum praceptis Theologiae Moralis Christianae [...]”

¹²⁴ *Catalogus praelectionum [...] a verno initio A.C. MDCCXII usque ad veris initium MDCCIII publice et privatim fuerunt [...] (Hamburg, 1713), StA HH, A 559/8, 7–8*:* “[...] diebus vero Jovis & Veneris interpretatus est libros sex primores noctium Atticarum Auli Gellii.”

¹²⁵ *Catalogus praelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXI usque ad veris initium MDCCII publice et privatim fuerunt [...] (Hamburg, 1712), StA HH, A 559/8, 10*:* “[...] practicum Oratorium, quo singulis hebdomadibus quaterni juvenes proposita ab ipso themata elaborarunt, & deinde emendata in Gymnasio vel e memoria dixerunt aut recitarunt.” These occasions included the centennial of the *Gymnasium illustre* as well to commemorate the drafting and passing of the Augsburg Confession. See Reimarus, *De vita et scriptis Joannis Alberti Fabricii commentarius* [...], 34–35: “Nec paucas toto illo spatio cum ab ipso tum a

reciprocated his dedication to teaching by composing little odes in Greek, praising him as “another Aristotle or Plato.”¹²⁶ When Fabricius was a student, Daniel Georg Morhof’s *Polyhistor* had deeply impressed him, ultimately guiding his journey through the thickets of scholarship and learning to his masterly compilation efforts.¹²⁷ Bred and raised in “the world of the polyhistors,”¹²⁸ Fabricius had plenty of experience and practical advice to dispense to promising students like Reimarus, who at the beginning of their careers were navigating through a vast sea of scholarship and to whom he served as a glowing model of integrity and erudition. Which student would have wanted to miss out on an occasion to listen to his lectures that had a reputation of being such refined Latin masterpieces that students “did not even need to invest any additional time reworking and polishing them at home”?¹²⁹ Even we, close to three hundred years later, may not have to!

The Royal Library in Copenhagen owns a manuscript that in its entirety is 231 pages in length and whose cover sheet reads as follows:

Praelectiones

B[eati] D[octoris] Jo[anni] Alberti Fabricii

*Eloq[uentiae] ac Mor[alium] Professoris quondam Publici in Gymnasio
Hamburg[o]*

discipulis publice orationes esse habitas constat [...] Anni 1713. in memoriam instituti ante centum annos Gymnasii, in quo post ipsum Fabricium septem Gymnasii cives verba fecerunt [...]; quintum denique Augustanae Confessionis, quo Orationem Fabricii & octodecim juvenum audisse recordamur.”

¹²⁶ “Ωδάριον φωνῇ γεγραμμένον ἐλλάδι πέμπω / Φαβρικίᾳ σαφέως τήνδε νοοῦντι βοήν, / δς νόος ἡμετέρῳ πεπονημένος ἔσκε λυκείῳ, / οῖος Ἀριστοτέλης ἔσκε Πλάτωνι πάλαι. / Ήντὸς, ἐὰν ζῆσῃ, δύναται ταῖς Λεψίσι Μούσαις / ἄλλος Ἀριστοτέλης, ὅλος ἔμεν τε Πλάτων”; quoted in Reimarus, *De vita et scriptis Joannis Alberti Fabricii commentarius*, 19.

¹²⁷ Johann Albert Fabricius, “Praefatio ad Lectorem,” in Morhof, *Polyhistor*, vol. 1, (a): “Multum semper debere me professus sum, ac profiteor libenter duumviris eruditis Germanis nostris CASPARI BARTHIO, & DANIELI GEORGIO MORHOFIO, quorum lucubrations evolvere me memini adolescentem magno cum fructu.”

¹²⁸ On the term and the concept, see Grafton, “The World of the Polyhistors,” as well as Herbert Jaumann, “Was ist ein Polyhistor? Gehversuche auf einem verlassenen Terrain,” *Studia Leibnitiana* 22 (1990), 76–89; also Martin Mulsow, “Polyhistorie,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, vol. 6, ed. Gerd Ueding et al. (Tübingen, 2003), 1521–26.

¹²⁹ Reimarus, *De vita et scriptis Joannis Alberti Fabricii commentarius* [...], 34: “Styli certe exercitationes, in quibus utraque aetas & Scholae & Gymnasio dictata vel maxime elaborare debet, non exiguum tempus domi expurgandis & poliendis elaboratis requirebant.”

quas De Studiis cum fructu instituendis privatim Auditoribus suis tum temporis recitavit, ac potiora momenta in calamum dictitavit consignante Gerhardo Lüders

A. MDCCXIII & MDCCXIV

Hamburgi in Gymnasio

adhuc versante.

[Lectures of the magnificent doctor Johann Albert Fabricius, once ordinary professor of eloquence and ethics at the *Gymnasium illustre* of Hamburg, on “how to plan your studies with success,” which he held privately for his students during the Academic year 1713–1714 at the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg, and from which he dictated important passages to Gerhard Lüders.]¹³⁰

It is very plausible that Reimarus, during his “senior year,” sat with some of his fellow students in Fabricius’s home, probably once or twice a week, to listen for an hour to the great man talk. Just adjacent to both the *Johanneum* and *Gymnasium illustre* in a dead-end street, Fabricius’s house provided the ideal setting for what was probably a smaller intellectual gathering.¹³¹ Surrounded by books and manuscripts,¹³² his listeners were able to take avid notes on how to rise and shine in the Republic of Letters and about what they needed to know to follow in the footsteps of their great teacher but may have been afraid to ask. Ultimately, however, it would not only spare them countless hours struggling through Morhof’s “appropriately chaotic handbook,”¹³³ but also help them to

¹³⁰ See note 79 above.

¹³¹ Almut Spalding, *Elise Reimarus (1735–1805): The Muse of Hamburg: A Woman of the German Enlightenment* (Würzburg, 2005), 61; see van Miert, “The Long Life of the Humanist Tradition,” 16.

¹³² Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland*, (Frankfurt, 1753), vol. 2, 86–87: “Nachmittags besuchten wir Herrn D. Joh. Alb. Fabricium, so bey dem Gymnasio wohnet, das vor diesem das Closter bey der Johanniskirche gewesen. Er empfing uns sehr höflich [...]. [Seine Bibliotheck] stehet wegen Mangel des Raums, und Bequemlichkeit des alten Hauses in sechs kleinen Zimmern, davon drey im zweyten, die andern drey aber nebstd einem kleinem Cabinet, darinnen lauter editiones autorum graecorum, auf dem dritten Stockwerk sind [...]. Es finden sich fast alle Editionen allhier, so er in seiner Bibliotheca latina & graeca anführt. Ja wo nur etwas heraus kommt, wird es ihm sogleich zugesendet; wie er uns dann wohl zwanzig der schönsten Bücher zeigte, so er dieses Jahr bereits aus Italien, Holl-und sonderlich Engelland erhalten.”

¹³³ Grafton, “The World of the Polyhistors,” 37.

plan diligently and organize their future studies once they graduated from the *Gymnasium*. They were aptly reminded that

he who wants to make fruitful progress in his studies should not only exhibit a love for books and literature [...] but he also needs to desire fervently to exert himself with all of his strength that he becomes so accomplished in some useful field of study in order to arrive wiser and better at the glory of God and to be able to provide some extraordinary service to Church, State, or what is useful to both of them, to the school [...].¹³⁴

In his attempt to delineate the *vastum mare eruditionis et variae ejus partes ac classes* [vast sea of learning, with its various parts and bodies],¹³⁵ Fabricius's lecture certainly followed in the footsteps of earlier humanists, such as Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577–1649)¹³⁶ or his own countryman from Hamburg, Johannes Wower (1574–1611).¹³⁷ Like the latter, Fabricius viewed grammar as the basis of all written knowledge. It encompasses not only the *grammatica antecursoria* with its focus on the skill to read, write, and speak a language properly,¹³⁸ but also *grammatica in se ipsa*, which, as Wower had suggested in

¹³⁴ Fabricius, *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*, 9–10: “Primum igitur in eo, qui felices in studiis progressus facere velit, hoc omnino requiritur, ut amet non modo libros ac literarum studia [...] sed etiam serio cupiat totis viribus eo eniti ac contendere, ut in aliquo genere scientiarum utilium ita proficiat, ut ad Dei gloriam possit melior et sapientior ipse evadere, et usum aliquem insignem praestare, vel Ecclesiae, vel Reipublicae vel quod in utriusque commodam redundet, scholae [...].”

¹³⁵ Ibid., 54: “Capp. vi. Vastum mare eruditionis et variae ejus partes ac classes, e quibus una maxime diligenda, caeterae delibandae.”

¹³⁶ Luc Deitz, “Gerardus Joannes Vossius’ *De philologia liber* und sein Begriff der ‘Philologie’,” in *Philologie und Erkenntnis: Beiträge zu Begriff und Problem frühneuzeitlicher ‘Philologie’*, ed. Ralph Häfner (Tübingen, 2001), 4–34.

¹³⁷ Luc Deitz, “Ioannes Wower of Hamburg, Philologist and Polymath. A Preliminary Sketch of his Life and Works,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 58 (1995), 145–46.

¹³⁸ Fabricius, *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*, 56: “[...] prima Grammatica non modo constituit in emendata lectione et scriptione, peritiaque linguam recte pronunciandi, et expedite loquendi, sed etiam dexteritate et scientia scriptores illius linguae enarrandi, obscura interpretandi, et quaecunque vel in verbis, vel in rebus difficultatem afferre possunt, removendi atque expediendi, tum etiam depravata emendandi, supposita a genuinis distinguendi, et de stilo atque ingenio scriptoris ferre judicium, quae quidem pars specialis appellabatur Critice [...]”; for a more elaborate discussion of the “ars critica,” see Herbert Jaumann, *Critica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Literaturkritik zwischen Quintilian und Thomasius* (New York, 1995).

his *De polymathia tractato*,¹³⁹ as technical, exegetical, and critical grammar, draws on a vast variety of auxiliary disciplines including *historia*, *geographia*, and *chronologia*.¹⁴⁰ Fabricius leaves little doubt that under these provisions the life of a humanist scholar becomes extremely difficult:

How vast a field [of scholarship] appears here, made inaccessible by many difficulties in the field of chronology and the calculation of time; how great it is in the study of geography for both an experienced scholar and newcomer, who wants to consult and understand it, just in the most delightful study of antiquity! How much industry must be invested in such a large number of ancient coins of all types of metal and value! So many ancient inscriptions, so many beautiful remnants of ancient buildings, ports, aqueducts, statues, columns, triumphal arches, obelisks, amphitheatres, pyramids, reliefs; so many remnants of stone tablets, vases, and various household instruments, of precious stones and other ancient relics; not to mention the pursuit of observing sacred, civil, military, and economic practices from the entire supply of the ancient authors, and thus of obtaining for oneself an adequate and sound knowledge of learned antiquity.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Deitz, “Ioannes Wower of Hamburg,” 145.

¹⁴⁰ Fabricius, *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*, 57–58: “Quemadmodum ad caetera, quae dixi, Grammaticae officia requirebant, ut, qui Scriptores interpretari vellet [...] unde ad Grammaticam hanc scientiam referebant studium omne Historiae, sive Mythicae illius ac fabularis, de rebus, locis, personis, sive verae, ejusque vel civilis, vel literariae atque antiquariae, Chronologiam quoque et Geographiam, sine quibus coecam esse historiam omnem, constat.”

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 59–61: “Quam amplus campus, quantis difficultatibus obseptus sese offert in Chronologia et temporum doctrina, quantus in Geographia veteri, cum recenti conferenda et recte intelligenda, jam in studio jucundissimo Antiquitatis! quanta materia industriae exercendae in tot Numismatibus antiquis omnis metalli ac moduli! tot inscriptio-nes antique, tot paeclarae reliquiae priscorum aedificiorum, portum, aquaeductuum, statuarum, columnarum, arcium triumphalium, obeliscorum, amphiteatrorum, pyramidorum, toreumatum, sive tabularum exsculptarum, vasarum, variaeque supellectilis et instrumenti, gemmarum et aliorum monumentorum antiquorum, ne dicam de studio priscos ritus sacros, civiles, militares, oeconomicos ex omni copia veterum Scriptorum observandi, atque ita idoneam et solidam eruditae antiquitatis notitiam sibi comparandi.”

And Fabricius knew what he was talking about! He had regularly lectured about the vast and complex field of antiquarian studies.¹⁴² From these lectures emerged his magnificent *Bibliographia antiquaria*, which was published sometime in the spring of 1713, just around the time when Reimarus started his “senior year” at the *Gymnasium*, in which he may have attended the lecture *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*. So these words were certainly still uttered under the impression of just-finished publication labors. But Fabricius would not be Fabricius if he had not provided some suggestions for his students on how to cope with this “information overload.”¹⁴³ The advice of a good teacher as a guide is essential so that the student learns how to prioritize his reading list and is introduced to the available tools, namely dictionaries, encyclopedias, thesauri, and catalogues that facilitate his endeavors.¹⁴⁴ Who other than Fabricius, master compiler and bibliographer, could have been a better guide? His young listeners learn about all the fabulous tools that a future man of letters might need to consult in order to sail smoothly through the vast ocean of learning and knowledge: if he needs to work on his Hebrew, both Buxtorf and Cocceius’s come in handy;¹⁴⁵ if he encounters a text in medieval Latin, he will not find a better aid than du Cange’s *Glossarium*;¹⁴⁶ and a look into Hesychius’s

¹⁴² Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliographia Antiquaria sive introductio in notitiam scriptorum qui antiquitates Hebraica Graecas Romanas et Christianas scriptis illustrarunt*, 3rd ed. (Hamburg, 1760), 7*: “Bibliographia haec privatatarum more praelectionum primum a me tradita, totaque consecrata fuit progressibus et captui studiosorum Iuuenum, frequentantium Gymnasium huius Vrbis [...]. Primus hic est atque unicus e privatatarum mearum scholarum commentarii, quem emittere in vulgus ausus sum [...].”

¹⁴³ Ann Blair: “Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload, ca. 1550–1700,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003), 11–28; “Note Taking as an Art of Transmission,” *Critical Inquiry* 31 (2004), 85–107; and *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, Conn., 2010).

¹⁴⁴ Fabricius, *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*, 110–11: “Cum vero tirones neutiquam illa vel judicii vel eruditionis facultate et copia praestent, ut ipsi per se initii delectum ejusmodi facere possint, necesse est, ut consilio interim Magistrorum suorum acquiescant, illudque sequantur, et tum in diligendis, quos legant, libris, tum in legendorum ordine judicium eorum sequantur.”

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 118: “Ex Hebraicis Lexicis poterit eligi, quod Jo. Coccejus composit, qui praeter alias versiones solet etiam B. Lutherum nostrum quam frequentissime advocare. Si quis vero desiderat plenum Lexicon Hebraicum, is Concordantes praeterea consulere debet, quales quidem de verbis et nominibus Jo. Buxtorfius, ne alios jam memorem, de particulis Chist. Noldius : Danus: | composit.”

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 117: “Indigemus etiam Lexico altero, quo voces mediae Latinitatis et Latino-barbarae explicantur, cuius generis praestantissimum est Glossarium Caroli du Fresne, Domini du Cange, quod superiori anno 1711 Francofurtensibus typis recusum fuit.”

Lexicon may help him expand his Greek vocabulary.¹⁴⁷ For information about the customs of ancient civilizations, he may consult the standard compendia by Reland¹⁴⁸ and Goodwin¹⁴⁹ on the ancient Hebrews; Johann Philipp Pfeiffer's *Libri quattuor antiquitatum Graecarum gentilium* (1689) on the ancient Greeks; on the Romans, Joannes Rosinus's *Antiquitatum Romanarum corpus absolutissimum* (1602); and Paul Hachenberg's collection¹⁵⁰ of public disputations from the University of Heidelberg about Germany.¹⁵¹ In his choice of a good classical edition he should be very selective. The one of his preference should have been emended and collated to manuscript codices, it should contain a good index, and ideally chronological charts or possibly even maps.¹⁵² But he should nonetheless always have Michel Antoine Baudrand's *Geographia ordine litterarum disposita* (1681–82), as well as Christoph Helvicus's *Theatrum historicum sive chronologiae systema novum* (1609) and, for the more technical chronological terminology, a copy of Aegidius Strauch's *Breviarium chronologiae* (1657) within reach.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 118: "Si quis ulteriores progressus in hac lingua [Graeca] facere voluerit, is cum fructu etiam adhibebit Glossaria antiqua: Hesychium, Etymologicum magnum, et quo nullum locupletius exstat, Varii Phavorinii Camertis Lexicon."

¹⁴⁸ Adriaan Reland, *Antiquitates aacrae Hebraeorum* (Utrecht, 1708).

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Goodwin, *Moses & Aaron, seu civiles & ecclesiastici ritus antiquorum hebraeorum* [...], 2nd ed. (Bremen, 1717).

¹⁵⁰ Paul Hachenberg, *Germania media publicis dissertationibus in Acad. Heidelbergensi proposta in qua res mediorum seculorum quae a Trajano ad Maximilianum I. fluxere, ex priscis auctoribus recensentur, mores, ritus, leges sacrae profanaeque ceremoniae illustrantur* [...] (Jena, 1709).

¹⁵¹ Fabricius, *De studiis*, 126–27: "Antiquitates ac ritus veteribus Hebraicis pariter, Graecis et Romanis, ne de aliis gentibus et praecipue Germanis nostris dicam, tum antiquis Christianis recepti sacri, Politici, militares et Oeconomici peti debent initio quidem ex scito aliquo Compendio, quale est vg. in Hebraicis viri clariss. Hadriani Relandi, vel Goodwini ex secunda meliori editione A. 1717. In Graecis [...] Jo. Phil. Pfeifferi Professoris Regiomontani, in Romanis Jo. Rosini [...]. De Germanis nescio, quem praeferam Paulo Hachenbergio, qui Germania Media Compendium quoddam Antiquitatum Germaniae mediæ aevi tradidit."

¹⁵² Ibid., 119: "(1) Ut sint emendatae /: excusae:/ a viro aliquo eruditio, et ad codices Mstos diligenter recensitae [...] (2) Alterum est, ut sit distinctus in capita vel sectiones, et bonis indicibus instructus [...]."

¹⁵³ Ibid., 120–21: "In quam rem adhibendum Lexicon aliquod Geographicum, in Veteri quidem Geographia Baudrundi [sic] [...]. Ad Chronologiam sufficiet Christoph. Helvetii [sic] Theatro, sive Tabulis Chronologicis adsuescere [...]. Ad vocabula Chronologiae Technicae intelligenda, ejusque rationes percipiendas utilissimus erit Egidii Strauchii liber, qui Breviarium Chronologicum inscribitur [...]."

We may picture Fabricius during his lecture, surrounded by his students in his house, waving copies of some of these books in the air and passing them around, since he undoubtedly owned all of them personally. But besides simply catching a glimpse of these vehicles of erudition, it is “worthwhile to know how to use books properly and how we ought to proceed in reading them so that great profit falls to us.”¹⁵⁴ Note-taking and organizing the information therefore assumed a key role in the world of scholarship. Fabricius, a master in it, was more than happy to advise his students on how they ought to “read” efficiently and effectively. His advice alludes to the humanist practice of the *loci communes*¹⁵⁵ as a technique of reading and appropriating information:

I advise students [...] to create two little notebooks in octavo or quarto, two or three thumbs in thickness [...], you should everywhere leave in the margins a space of a thumb in width for notes on either the names of the authors, which you have read or from whom you have taken notes, the title of the books, and cross-references [...]. The student will use one of these booklets to compile words, phrases, sophisticated sentences, and passages. The other one [is] for aphorisms and apophthegmata, similes, examples, tales, and the like [...]. In the former booklet and in the order of reading, authors and whatever worthy words suggest themselves—not the common, but less obvious ones—are noted down: for example, the Latin ones [are listed] separately from the Greek, vernacular, and also Hebrew ones: their individual usage, significance, stress, their derivation, or etymology, which he did not know before, and which he believes worthy to know. The last twenty or thirty pages of this part he leaves for unresolved questions, which are those parts that he may be able to solve or understand while he continues to read [...]. In the other booklet and in the order they occur in [his reading], those ancient or recent sayings are noted down, acutely, elegantly, and wisely, which talk about virtues,

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 136: “Operae pretium itaque est nosse, quomodo libris recte uti, et quomodo in lectione earum versari debeamus, ut major inde utilitas ad nos redundet.”

¹⁵⁵ On the *loci communes*, see Anthony Grafton, “Les lieux communs chez les humanistes,” in *Lire, copier, écrire: Les bibliothèques manuscrites et leurs usages au XVIII^e siècle*, ed. Élisabeth Déculot (Paris, 2003), 31–42; also Helmut Zedelmaier, “Lesetechniken. Die Praktiken der Lektüre in der Neuzeit,” in *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Mulsow et al., 21–22, as well as Zedelmaier, “De ratione excerpti: Daniel Georg Morhof und das Exzerpieren,” in *Mapping the World of Learning: The ‘Polyhistor’ of Daniel Georg Morhof*, ed. Françoise Waquet (Wiesbaden, 2000), 79–92; on the genre of printed commonplace books, see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996).

about vices and whatever, by which he is greatly moved and overjoyed, which he may use again some other time, and which he wishes to seek out again. These kinds of maxims must not only be stored in excerpts, but by means of frequent repetition [...] they must be consigned to memory. But not only aphorisms, apophthegmata, and proverbs must be noted down in this fashion, but equally also those things must be stored in this commentary that stimulate any kind of reader about ancient and new customs, proceedings and special occurrences, and any noteworthy things, so that they can be accessed again at will.¹⁵⁶

Whereas today the use of card catalogues and non-electronic forms of knowledge organization and data storage finds an ever-decreasing number of steadfast believers, not to mention practitioners, the subject produced a tremendous body of essays and “how-to books” during the seventeenth century. Since there was little indication that the constant flow of books from Europe’s printing presses would ever run dry, manuals such as Francesco Sacchini’s *De ratione libros cum profectu legendi* (1614) or Jeremias Drexel’s *Aurifodina artium et scientiarum* (1638) became survival guides for the scholars of the day to find

¹⁵⁶ Fabricius, *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*, 150–52: “Ita loco magnorum voluminum, in quae sub certis titulis singula remittantur, suaserim potius, a tironibus fieri binos libellos chartae purae in forma octava, vel quarta, duorum vel trium digitorum altitudine [...], relictis ubique marginibus pollicis latitudine, vel ad nomina auctorum, quos legis et excerptis, vel ad titulos, vel ad paginas locorum parallelorum, si forte opus sit, notandas. Alterum horum librorum consecrabit tiro verbis, phrasibus, elegantiis, formulis etc.: alterum sententias et Apophthegmatibus, Similibus, Exemplis et Historiis atque aliis [...]. In priore libello notabuntur eo ordine, quo leguntur Scriptores, quaecunque observatu digna occurrunt verba, non e trivio, sed minus obvia: Latina v[erbi] gr[atis] vel separatim Graeca, vel vernacula etiam, vel Hebraica: usus eorum singularis, proprietas, emphasis, notatio nominis, sive Etymologia, quam ignorabat antea, et notatu dignam arbitratur [...]. Paginas 20 vel 30 postremas hujus partis relinquet quaerendis, h[oc] e[st] locis illis annotandis, quae inter legendum intelligere et assequi poterit [...]. In altero libro notabuntur eodem, quo inter legendum occurrunt ordine, acute, eleganter et sapienter dicta de virtutibus, vitiis et rebus quibuscumque, antiqua, nova, quibus impense movetur ac delectatur, et quibus alio tempore iterum uti, et quas sibi quaesitas offerri rursus optat. Hujusmodi gnomae non tantum in excerpta referenda, sed crebra repetitione [...] memoriae mandanda sunt. Neque vero sententiae tantum et Apophthegmata et proverbia sunt ita annotanda, sed similiter etiam in hunc commentarium referenda, quae de antiquis vel novis ritibus, actionibus et eventibus singularibus et rebus memoratu dignis cujuscumque generis animum legentis feriunt, ut deinde repetita etiam possint placere.”

ways of managing the overabundance of printed material.¹⁵⁷ As we can tell from Fabricius's lecture, however, the goal was not only to extract information on certain subject matters, but also to create a treasure chest filled with stylish phrases and rhetorical devices that could be opened at will or, ideally, committed to memory. So it is not surprising that Fabricius, following in the footsteps of his model Morhof and his predecessor Placcius,¹⁵⁸ viewed the *ars excerpendi*, both in theory and in practice, as a key skill that would help his students on their way to scholarly merits. It remains unclear to what extent Reimarus drew on such a chest, which would have prepared him well for his learned correspondence with Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini. Encouragement to create such notebooks could also have come from Johann Christoph Wolf, who had carefully read Drexel's manual and followed his advice.¹⁵⁹ There is, however, some evidence that Fabricius's advice may not have been entirely lost on him. The Reimarus papers in Hamburg, for example, still contain some sheets of notes, which illustrate how Reimarus worked on his monumental edition of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. The last few pages of these sheets are labeled *Quaerenda* [queries].¹⁶⁰ Among his papers is also a set of sheets marked "Auszüge aus der Literatur und wissenschaftliche Notizen" [literary excerpts and scholarly annotations].¹⁶¹ A large portion of these clearly fragmentary pages contains excerpts, often under a specific subject heading, from a very diverse body of authors. They may in fact be portions of Reimarus's notebooks, albeit not necessarily in the strict sense of *loci communes*.

But the "practices of scholarship" and learning were not the only things that Reimarus could have learned from his mentor Fabricius. A tireless worker, whose physical condition never seemed to suffer,¹⁶² Fabricius knew too well

¹⁵⁷ Florian Neumann, "Jeremias Drexels *Aurifodina* und die *Ars excerpendi* bei den Jesuiten," in *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Mulsow et al., 56–57.

¹⁵⁸ Zedelmaier, "De ratione excerpendi," 88; also Mulsow, "Practices of Unmasking," 231–43, as well as research by Ann Blair (see note 143 above).

¹⁵⁹ Martin Mulsow, "Mikrogramme des Orients: Johann Christoph Wolfs Notizhefte und seine Cudworth-Lektüre," in *Philologie als Wissensmodell*, ed. Denis Thouard et al. (New York, 2010), 345–81.

¹⁶⁰ StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 6, "Bibliographische Notizen zur Sinnesphysiologie (Vorarbeit für die "Tribe der Thiere") und zu Cassius Dio."

¹⁶¹ StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 7, "Auszüge aus der Literatur und wissenschaftliche Notizen."

¹⁶² Reimarus describes Fabricius's physical health as follows: "Nam gaudebat primum per naturam valetudine corporis adeo inconcussa, ut prope intra triginta vitae postremos annos eum aegrotasse non meminerim. Quae tamen utique sanitas corporis partem suam traxit, cum a placida mente, nullo suo impetu vehementiori gratum corporis hospitium perturbante, tum a moderata exercitatione ipsius corporis, in deambulando praecipue

that the Benedictine motto *ora et labora* would be a far cry from the ideal lifestyle of an eighteenth-century man of letters. His students were able to witness Fabricius alternate effortlessly from scholar to life coach. Anticipating Benjamin Franklin's "Early to bed and early to rise" by about twenty years,¹⁶³ the great humanist warns his students about the perils of scholarship at some unreasonable hour of the day:

Some people are so inclined to working late in the evening that they conduct their studies until midnight and beyond, until, as Comicus put it, their loins hurt from sitting and their eyes from reading [...]. But it is necessary for those, who sit for such a long time with their books after dinner, to get up so much later in the morning and thus cheat their studies of the better part of the day. Besides, the digestion of the meal interferes with the attention of the mind, which studies require [...].¹⁶⁴

According to Fabricius, students should get enough rest to prevent exhaustion and sickness. In their daily routine they should include plenty of physical exercise and mental distraction.¹⁶⁵ Whether the student chooses to take strolls in the park,¹⁶⁶ rides his horse,¹⁶⁷ dances,¹⁶⁸ or succumbs to the pleasures of

posita, denique a temperatione cibi potusque, modum severiore, saltem ratione multitudinis, interdum quoque inediā, servante"; see Reimarus, *De vita et scriptis Joannis Alberti Fabricii*, 41.

¹⁶³ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanack* (repr. Mount Vernon, 1980), 43* (unpaginated): "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

¹⁶⁴ Fabricius, *De studiis cum fructu instituendis*, 43–44: "Alii lucubrationibus vespertinis ita indulgent, ut ad medium noctem usque et ultra perducant studium sciendi, donec, quod ait Comicus, lumbi sedendo, oculi legendō, doleant [...]. Nam primo necesse est, eos, qui tamdiu libris post coenam assident, tanto tardius mane surgere, atque adeo meliore parte diei se suaque studia fraudare. Deinde per intentionem animi, quam requirunt studia, concoctio ciborum impeditur [...]."

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 203: "Quemadmodum negari nequit, ad studia literarum incumbentibus permittendas esse subinde relaxtiones laborum, quo alacrius deinde illos recapessere, atque novis veluti viribus animi, corporisque recreati tanto felicius in cursu studiosorum suorum progressi valeant [...]."

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 205: "Deambulationes sive in Muses, sive etiam per campum vel hortos factae, plurimum quoque conducunt sanitati [...]."

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 209: "Equitandi qualiscunque peritia non utilis, et quandoque necessaria est iter factoris in peregrinas regiones [...]."

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 209: "Choreas ducere [...] saepe non indecorum est, licet multis id longe pluris constet, et longe majore temporis dispendio redimendum est, quam fructus, vel utilitas, quam exinde capere possunt."

music,¹⁶⁹ such diversions are ultimately, albeit in moderation when it comes to *ludi*,¹⁷⁰ critical for his sanity and success. According to Fabricius, the rule must always be that the student does not indulge in any form of distraction to such an extent that it becomes his real passion and his love of scholarship wanes.¹⁷¹ Fabricius's warning about the dangers of gambling and mundane pleasures was certainly a well-meant and appropriate counsel to the untainted student body of the *Gymnasium illustre*, who would sooner or later face the binge-drinking realities of student life at Jena or Wittenberg.¹⁷² When he said that, Fabricius most likely did not have his protégé Reimarus in mind. Such fears would have been unsubstantiated. Given his weak physique and fragile health, Reimarus certainly was no passionate athlete,¹⁷³ although he was awed by his friend Johann Julius Surland's (1687–1748) gymnastic and equestrian skills.¹⁷⁴ Nor would he succumb to the temptations of rambunctious, though

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 205–6: “[...] commode succedet dulcis Musices usus, qui per aures ipsum animum hilari feret modulamine, ad eumque reficiendum, plus, quam quisquam accredat, conferre potest [...]”

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 210: “[...] ne in ludis, qui aleam continent, possit nobis innasci lucrandi cupiditas, et pecunia alios emungendi, quae res non modo arctius animum constringit ad ludos confectandos, et societatem hominum illis deditorum amplectendam, sed etiam in innumera alia mala incautos solet pertrahere.”

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 203: “In omni igitur vacatione et recreationis genere hoc unice cavendum, ne otium aut relaxationem quamcunque diligamus per se, ejusque studium aut desiderarium prae amore et studio literarum mentem nostram occupare patiamur [...]”

¹⁷² See, for example, the testimony of Johann Christian Edelmann: “Ich komme wider nach Jena, allwo es zu meinen Zeiten noch über die massen wild und ungezogen unter den lieben Musen-Söhnen zugiang. Man hätte sie eher Bachus-Martis-und Veneris-Söhne, als Kinder der Weisheit und Tugend nennen können”; Johann Christian Edelmann, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 12: *Selbstbiographie*, ed. and intr. Walter Grossmann (Stuttgart, 1976), 38.

¹⁷³ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 4 July 1743, vqs. Ms. 257: “Recte autem suspicaris, obfuisse mihi valetudinem, qua silicet jam per triennium adeo dubia et fragili utor, ut ex frequenti insomnia et capitidis doloribus imparem me literis et seriae meditationi esse sentiam [...]”

¹⁷⁴ Mönckeberg, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und Johann Christian Edelmann*, 15–16: “Er hatte sich dort an einen Jüngling angeschlossen, der späterhin sich um seine Vaterstadt sehr verdient gemacht hat. Es war Johann Julius Surland, der später als Syndicus Hamburg 24 mal [...] vertrat [...]. Reimarus selbst schilderte ihn später in der Lebensbeschreibung, die er von ihm macht, als einen geistig höchst begabten Jüngling voll Poesie und natürlicher Beredsamkeit, dabei wohlgestaltet, von starken Muskeln und großer Gelenkigkeit. Arme hatte er, nach seiner Beschreibung, gleich einem Athleten; denn die Kraft, die er von Natur hatte, stärkte er durch die Uebung kriegerischer Künste. Zu allen Leibesübungen geschickt, übte er außer den gewöhnlichen Tänzen die Tänze, welche die Römer zu ihren Kriegsübungen anzuwenden pflegten. Ich habe gesehen, fährt er fort, wie er mit unglaublicher Schnelligkeit von einem niedrigen Ort auf einen hohen sich inaufschwang, dann,

amicable, fencing matches with his fellow students, in which a slightly more hotheaded Johann Christian Edelmann (1698–1767)¹⁷⁵ came close to stabbing one of his friends to death.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, he probably had all the stigmata of a library geek. Somewhat older than most of his peers at Jena and Wittenberg and with an air of arrogance, he most likely sneered at the hopelessly clumsy attempts of his fellow students to master Hebrew or Greek. Less privileged students such as Edelmann¹⁷⁷ were often ill prepared for the academic challenges at institutions of higher learning and, while struggling through a propaedeutic course of study, could only hope to catch the attention of one of the professors, who would recognize their talent and be inclined to mentor them.¹⁷⁸ That such a stroke of luck would happen was much more likely in a private lecture setting, which ensured a more intimate connection with the professor. But it also required the payment of an additional fee, thus putting students with lesser means at a disadvantage. Much of such a “stroke of luck” depended on the skill of the student, his previous training, and his willingness to approach professors, who were often looking for assistants to organize their library, buy books, or help them with their research.¹⁷⁹ For the immensely talented, though overly

wie im Fluge, hinabsprang, über Alles, was im Wege stand, Gegenstände, die ihm bis an die Schulter reichten, wegsetzte. Leicht wurde es ihm, in der Reitbahn dem Pferde von hinten bis in den Sattel zu springen, und dann wieder sich schnell zu erheben und über den Kopf wegzusetzen. Mit eignen Augen habe ich ihn dann wieder die Waffen auf geschickteste führen, die geschicktesten Kunstgriffe und wunderbaren Lagen anwenden sehen [...].”

¹⁷⁵ The Enlightenment radical Johann Christian Edelmann matriculated at the University of Jena on 4 May 1720, only six years after Reimarus. See ill. 36 in Siegfried Schmidt et al., eds., *Alma mater Jenensis: Geschichte der Universität Jena* (Weimar, 1983).

¹⁷⁶ See Edelmann, *Selbstbiographie*, 39–40: “Wie ich nun einen Stoß nach ihm that, so traf ich Ihn mit der Spitze des Degens dergestalt auf die rechte Brust, daß der Degen fingerslang in den Leib ging, und er sofort käseweiß wurde [...] So unschuldig als ich war, indem ich nicht den geringsten Vorsatz gehabt hatte, Ihn zu verletzen, so angst war mir doch, ehe wir die Beschaffenheit der Wunde erkundet hatten [...].”

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 36–37: “Es wurde zu meinen Zeiten die hebräische Sprache sehr stark getrieben [...]. Je mehr ich mir Mühe gab es in dieser sogenannten h. Geists-Sprache zu etwas gründlichen zu bringen, je weniger Grund fand ich darin [...].”

¹⁷⁸ See Anthony J. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent and Merit: Poor Students, Clerical Careers, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (New York, 1988), 46.

¹⁷⁹ Johann Salomo Semler, for example, was extremely fortunate to have gained the attention of Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten, for whom he became a research assistant, but whose mentorship became instrumental for his studies and career. See Johann Salomo Semler, *Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst abgefaßt*, pars 1 (Halle, 1781), 95–117: “Den zweiten Winter fingen wir Collegia an bey dem sel. Baumgarten [...] und wir ersonnen viele

timid, Johann Jacob Reiske (1716–1774),¹⁸⁰ for example, the studies at Leipzig during the 1730s turned out to be a nightmare. With no friend or mentor in sight, he studied mainly by himself, frequently succumbing to the temptations of phases of interest, but never able to sustain any of them.¹⁸¹

Reimarus's experience could not have been more different. He came to Jena fluent in the three classical languages and capable probably in Syriac and Aramaic as well. Whereas at the end of his studies a student such as Edelmann could only hope to be able to stammer through the historical books of the Bible in Hebrew, Reimarus arrived at Jena, having most likely already read the entire Bible in the original languages, as well as a good amount of unvocalized rabbinic and Talmudic Hebrew, possibly even in the form of manuscripts. He probably had already used the most important research tools and bibliographical reference sources and not only heard about the most important antiquarian works in the field, but most likely looked at them in Fabricius's library. Having received personal attention from two of the best minds of his day, his professors at Jena could not easily impress him. Several of his teachers had personal scholarly exchanges with both Fabricius and Wolf. A student with a letter of introduction from one or both of them did not need to prove himself much further.¹⁸² So we should not be surprised that a somewhat snobbish

Gelegenheiten, um ihn oft sprechen zu können; denn in der festgesetzten Stunde, kamen wir oft nicht vor, wegen der grossen Anzahl derer, die vielleicht was für sie selbst wichtigeres anzubringen hatten. Meine Blicke waren gleichsam in seine Augen geheftet, so oft sie auch ehrerbietig sich wieder zurückzogen [...]. Da der grosse Kanzler Böhmer gestorben war, trug mir Baumgarten auf in seinem Namen ein sapphisches Trauergedicht lateinisch zu entwerfen [...]. Bisher setzte ich also in Halle solche Arbeiten noch immer fort, die mir Baumgarten anwies; worunter manche Recensionen in den Nachrichten von einer hallischen Bibliothek sind [...]; on the subject of the “poor theology student,” see La Vopa, *Grace, Talent and Merit*, 25–26.

¹⁸⁰ On Reiske, see Hans-Georg Ebert and Thoralf Hanstein, eds., *Johann Jacob Reiske—Leben und Wirkung: Ein Leipziger Byzantinist und Begründer der Orientalistik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 2005).

¹⁸¹ See Johann Jacob Reiske, *Von ihm selbst aufgesetzte Lebensbeschreibung* (Leipzig, 1783), 8–9: “Ich lebte für mich, studirte nach meiner Fantasie, hörte keine Collegia, hatte keinen Lehrer, keinen Anweiser, keinen Freund, fragte niemanden um Rath [...]. Ich studirte immer drauf los, ohne Ordnung und Endzweck, ohne zu wissen auf was; und ich muß gestehen, der grösste Theil derer fünf Jahre, die ich als Student in Leipzig zubrachte, sind für mich verloren gegangen [...].”

¹⁸² Both Johann Franz Buddeus and Johann Andreas Danz corresponded with Fabricius and Wolf. See Petersen, *Johann Albert Fabricius*, vol. 2, 914 and 917; shortly after Reimarus's arrival in Jena, Buddeus wrote to Johann Christoph Wolf in Hamburg: “Ex litteris Tuis humanissimis suavissimisque, quas Surlandius et Reimarus, optimi praestantissimique

Reimarus informed his mentor Fabricius that he rarely encountered anything at Jena that was new to him.¹⁸³

We can hardly imagine how longingly he must have looked back to his beloved scholarly Eden on the Elbe, where he had the intellectual milieu that favored the exchange of ideas, and the resources to pursue them. He probably could not wait for the day to mount the lectern himself, no longer just as a protégé but as a peer of his famous mentors. With his lobby already in place, it was only a matter of time before this day would in fact arrive and Reimarus could move from protégé to peer within the Hamburg academic community.

iuvenes recte mihi [...] diderunt, intellexi, Te alias per amicum ad me dedisse, quibus ad superiores meas respondisti. Sed eas me nam accepisse, seitote. Iuvenibus istis, qui ex Tua disciplina ad nos venerunt pro virilius ingenium; idque cum affieii mei ratio postulet, simul tamen efficiam ut intelligent, quanti apud me Tua valeat commendatio"; see letter Johann Franz Buddeus to Johann Christoph Wolf, 27 May 1714, SUB HH, Sup. ep. 114, 489 r.

¹⁸³ Letter Reimarus to Fabricius, 19 January 1715, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Ms. Fabr. 104–123. "Nova, quae hic gerantur non adeo multa sunt."

Among Pagans and Hebrews

Teaching Jewish Antiquities in Eighteenth-Century Hamburg

On 15 July 1727, Reimarus's long-held dreams of a professorship in his beloved native city of Hamburg came true.¹ He finally became a colleague to his much-admired mentor Fabricius at the *Gymnasium illustre*. After what must have been in his own perception a dismal interlude as headmaster of the Latin School in Wismar, where the faculty seemed little appreciative of his scholarly demeanor,² he finally came back. But it took some string pulling. Although the *Gymnasium illustre* was not averse to hiring its own, it was not always to one's advantage to have been bred and raised in Hamburg. A professorship was generally granted for life, and with a total of only six such permanent positions, these rarely became available. The board of education had its own set of standards and criteria and remained highly selective in their choice of candidates, despite the fact that the stipulated salary was hardly a major selling point to high-profile faculty from outside.³ Often, aspiring young scholars were turned away and discouraged, partly due to their age and partly due to personal issues between members of the hiring committee and the applicant. After his return from Göttingen, the *Gymnasium* alumnus Johann Georg Büsch (1728–1800), for example, spent several miserable years in Hamburg desperately trying to find an appointment as tutor or private teacher.⁴ When there was an opening at the *Gymnasium*, several committee members opposed his candidacy because they

1 The title of his inaugural lecture was *De studiis Graecarum literarum atque humanitatis apud priscos Hebraeos* [On the study of Greek sciences and letters among the ancient Hebrews]. A manuscript of this speech still exists at the Staatsarchiv in Hamburg as StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 1.

2 Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Introduction," in Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Kleine gelehrte Schriften. Vorstufen zur Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (Göttingen, 1994), 25–26.

3 A few decades later, Johann Georg Büsch would make a similar assessment: "Mittlerweile ward das Lehramt der Mathematik an unserm Gymnasium zweimal erledigt [...]. Es fand sich kein würdig geachteter Bewerber in Hamburg, und das feste Gehalt [...] war zu gering, um den Platz einem auswärtigen Manne von einigem Rufe anzutragen"; Johann Georg Büsch, *Erfahrungen*, vol. 4: *Ueber den Gang meines Geistes und meiner Täglichkeit* (Hamburg, 1794), 187–88.

4 Ibid., 173–74: "Traurig mußte ich also nach Hamburg zurück ziehen. Hier suchte ich nun so viel an gelegentlicher Brod durch Unterricht jeder Art zu gewinnen, da ich sonst wirklich meiner guten Mutter zur Last fallen mußte. Aber jetzt gieng es mir noch schlechter [...]. Fast

knew him from his student days and had a hard time allowing his star to rise at such a rapid rate.⁵

Reimarus's lobby in Hamburg, however, was strong. Although Johann Christoph Wolf had abandoned his professorship at the *Gymnasium* after he was appointed senior pastor at Saint Catherine's, his new position gave him an even greater influence on decisions regarding the *Gymnasium's* curriculum and faculty appointments. Automatically with his appointment came membership to the board of education, which consisted of twenty-four members, including the five senior pastors of the main churches.⁶ Without his teaching obligations, Wolf had become an even more prolific writer and his word had considerable weight, in matters of scholarship just as much as in matters of theology or education (Fig. 2).⁷

The minutes of the board meeting that convened on 6 November 1727 to appoint a successor for the recently deceased Georg Eliezer Edzardus

wöchentlich hatte ich einen Vorfall dieser Art, daß ich vorgeschlagen, gerufen, besehen und kalt entlassen ward."

5 Ibid., 194: "Unter den 24 Wählenden waren wenigstens zehn, die mich von Jugend auf gekannt hatten. Auf sie rechnete ich vorzüglich [...]. Denn sie insonderheit mußten Gutes von mir wissen, und keiner konnte Böses von mir wissen. Aber ich fand sie fast alle äußerst kalt. Die es am besten mit mir meinten, waren furchtsam sich für mich zu erklären, und fürchteten mit ihrer Stimme allein zu bleiben. Einer sagte mir es ins Gesicht, daß er mich viel zu jung zu einem Professor halte [...]. Ein anderer strebte mir offenbar entgegen, und gestand zwar, daß meine Schrift völlig seinen Beifall hätte, ich sei aber zu jung."

6 Johann Klefeker, *Sammlung der Hamburgischen Gesetze und Verfassungen* [...], vol. 6: *Der Sechste Theil in welchem die Verfassung des Gymnasii und Johannei und der öffentlichen Stadt-Bibliothek ... enthalten sind* (Hamburg, 1768), 62–63: "Die nächste Aufsicht beydes über das Gymnasium und Johanneum ist einem sehr ansehnlichen Collegio in unsrer Republik anvertrauet. Und dies ist das [...] im Jahre 1610 durch Rath-und Bürgerschluß am 16. Aug. errichete, Collegium Scholarchale, so aus 4 Herren des Raths, den beyden ältesten Gelehrten und Kauf-Herren, davon ersterer den Namen Protoscholarchae als Director führet, den Herren Haupt-Pastoren an den 5 Kirchen, und gesammten Ehrb. Oberalten, mithin aus 24 Personen besehet. Von diesem ansehnlichen Collegio [...] hanget die Berufung der Lehrer, und überhaupt alles dasjenige ab, was unter dem Namen der Vorsorge für das inner und äussere Beste beyder Anstalten begriffen werden kann."

7 Unlike Johann Georg Büsch, who could not rely on any such influential advocate to promote his application: "Zu angenehmern Beschäftigungen verschlossen sich alle Wege, selbst dann, wenn ich sie völlig geöffnet zu sehen glaubte. Ich stand doch auch nicht mit Einem Menschen in Verbindung, der auf meine bis dahin erworbene Fähigkeit und Kenntnisse so acht zu haben schien, daß ich mir von seiner guten Meinung wesentliche Vortheile zu versprechen gewagt hätte"; see Büsch, *Erfahrungen*, vol. 4: *Ueber den Gang meines Geistes und meiner Tätigkeit*, 189–90.



FIGURE 2 *Portrait of Johann Christoph Wolf* (1683–1739) by unknown painter [18th century]
COURTESY OF STAATS- UND UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK HAMBURG,
GEMÄLDESAMMLUNG 31

(1661–1727) suggest that Wolf’s arguments in favor of his former pupil must have sounded convincing to the ears of the hiring committee, because Reimarus beat his fiercest contender for the position by a landslide.⁸ But Wolf’s intervention on Reimarus’s behalf was not a simple act of nepotism. He could support his former pupil’s candidacy with a clear conscience since he had carefully monitored the latter’s progress both at Jena and then later at the University of Wittenberg, where Reimarus formally received his degree. He witnessed how Reimarus had increasingly grown into a skilled Hebraist, cognizant of the subtleties of Hebrew grammar.

An early indicator of Reimarus’s potential was his sophisticated dissertation at Wittenberg, entitled *De differentiis vocum Hebraicarum*,⁹ which Wolf supervised informally from afar.¹⁰ Having plowed through a most impressive body of key works of Lutheran theology and manuals on textual criticism—such as Matthias Flacius’s *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* (1567), Johann Heinrich Majus’s succinct *Introductio ad studium philologicum* (1698),¹¹ Valentin Ernst Löscher’s widely celebrated *De causis linguae Ebraea* (1706),¹² August Pfeiffer’s *Critica sacra* (1680),¹³ not to forget Jean Le Clerc’s *Ars critica* (1696), and Glassius’s *Philologia sacra* (1623), just to name a few, as well as countless lexica, thesauri,

⁸ For the minutes see StA HH, 361–1 Scholarchat II, 121. The names of the other five selected candidates were Edzardus, Rasitz (?), Bucher, Stain, and Majer. Eighteen of the twenty-one board members present voted for Reimarus. The remaining three votes went to Reimarus’s chief contender Edzardus, who was most likely either Esdras Heinrich Edzardus (1703–1733), the son of Sebastian Edzardus, or Johann Hieronymus Edzardus (1704–1754), a son of the deceased Georg Eliezer Edzardus. The latter’s noteworthy competence in the Oriental languages would have made him a very good fit for the position. See “Johann Hieronymus Edzarus,” in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, vol. 2 (1854), 134.

⁹ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *De differentiis vocum Hebraicarum* (Wittenberg, 1717).

¹⁰ In a letter to Wolf, Reimarus writes: “Ex literis tuis magna cum voluptate intellexeram, non displicere Tibi meum institutum, eoque vehementius calcar additum mihi existimavi, ut in coepio semel cursu strenue pergerem”; see Reimarus to Wolf, Wittenberg, 18 April 1717, SUB HH, Sup. ep. 119, 431 r.

¹¹ Johann Heinrich Majus, *Introductio ad studium philologicum, criticum & exegeticum brevis & perspicua* (Giessen, 1698); on Johann Heinrich May, see “Johan Heinrich Majus,” in *Zedlers Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, vol. 19 (Halle, 1739), 657–60.

¹² Valentin Ernst Löscher, *De causis linguae Hebraeae* (Leipzig, 1706); on Löscher, see Martin Greschat, “Valentin Ernst Löscher,” in *Orthodoxie und Pietismus*, ed. Martin Greschat (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1982), 287–300.

¹³ August Pfeiffer, *Critica sacra, de sacri codicis partitione, editionibus, interpretatione, translationibus [...]* (Dresden, 1680); Johannes Wallmann, “Pfeiffer, August,” in *RGG*, vol. 6 (Tübingen, 2003), 1231.

and bibliographies by Bartolocci,¹⁴ Buxtorf,¹⁵ Cocceius,¹⁶ Le Long,¹⁷ Plantavit de la Pause,¹⁸ and Wolf¹⁹—the twenty-three-year-old Reimarus demonstrated not only scholarly rigor and breathtaking skill in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, but also his familiarity with the most heated debates and scholarly questions in the field.²⁰ His little treatise was more than just an exercise in bibliography and literary review. Its core segment brought him into the complex world of semiotics and lexicology, where he proved his fine grasp of the peculiarities of the Hebrew language and style by contextualizing and explaining the role of synonymy in word pairs such as אָמֵן versus אִישׁ [man of high status versus man of low status],²¹ in a set of verbs such as פְּعַל [do, make], הָשַׁׁחַ [do, make], צְرַר [form, fashion], and בְּרַא [form, fashion, create],²² as well as the proper translation of the infinitive absolute in constructions such as אָכְלָתְכֶל [eat you may eat = you may eat freely] or נִקְרָם יִנְקֹרֶם [punish, he will be punished = he shall

¹⁴ Giulio Bartolocci, *Bibliotheca magna Rabbinica* [...], 5 vols. (Rome, 1675–94). Jacques Le Long, *Bibliotheca Sacra sive syllabus omnium ferme Sacrae Scripturae editionum ac versionum* [...], 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1709).

¹⁵ Johannes Buxtorf, *Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum* [...] 2 vols. (Basel, 1639).

¹⁶ Johann Cocceius, *Lexicon et commentarius sermonis Hebraici et Chaldaici Veteris Testamenti* [...] (Amsterdam, 1669).

¹⁷ Jacque Le Long, *Bibliotheca Sacra sive syllabus omnium ferme Sacrae Scripturae editionum ac versionum* [...], 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1709).

¹⁸ Jean Plantavit de la Pause, *Planta Vitis seu thesaurus synonymicus Hebraico-Chaldaico-Rabbinicus* (Lodève, 1644).

¹⁹ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea sive notitia tum auctorun Hebraeorum* [...], vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1715).

²⁰ See chapter 3 for a discussion of the problem of the vowel controversy and the *Hebraica veritas*.

²¹ Reimarus, *De differentiis vocum Hebraicarum*, 55–58: “Communissima sententia est, אָדָם notare hominem plebejum, & vilioris conditionis, אִישׁ vero nobiliorem, quam etiam BEN. MELECH, ad Ps. citatum, calculo suo, corroborat: בני אָדָם הַמּוֹן הָעֵם בְּנֵי אִישׁ הַמּוֹן הַגְּדוֹלִים בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל [...]. Re interim, curatus, perpensa, ut ut, non sine fundamento, haec dici deprehenderim, haud aegre tamen, ut crederem, inductus sum, quod ultraque vox latius, quandoque, accipienda sit, & שָׁׁאָן quidem pro homine, non fortunae solum, sed & ingenii, ac virtutum, praestantia insigni, סְדָא autem pro homine, non vilioris modo conditionis, sed & rudi, ac simplici, opibusque destituo [...]. Ως ἐν παρόδῳ hic observare liceat, simile *Latinis* discrimen esse, inter hominem & Virum, & *Graecis* inter ἀνθρωπος & ἀνήρ [...]. Multi hinc repetendum existimant, quod CHRISTUS, tum a se ipso, tam ab aliis, vocatus sit ὑιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [sic], nempe humilis quidam, & ad vulgus hominum referendus [...].”

²² Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Disputationem III. de differentiis vocum Hebraicarum* (Wittenberg, 1718), 3–16.

surely be punished].²³ Although his philological training had demonstrated to him that analogies to profane works could at times be helpful to elucidate difficult biblical passages, theologically he proved himself a staunch Lutheran advocate of the purity of the Hebrew text and the doctrine of inspiration.²⁴

This combination of scholarly excellence and Lutheran piety must certainly have played a role in convincing the board of education to offer the job to Reimarus. But it required nothing less than excellence to follow in the footsteps of his mentor Wolf. Hamburg had seen a number of great Hebraists²⁵ who were in one way or another connected to the *Gymnasium*.²⁶ The most influential of them had probably been Esdras Edzardus,²⁷ himself partly a product of the Buxtorf dynasty²⁸ and a former pupil of the Jewish scholar David Cohen de

²³ See Reimarus, *De differentiis vocum Hebraicarum*, 53: “*Infinitivus, Finito praepositus, certitudinem, evidentiā, ac excellentiam, exprimit, Gen. 11, 16. De fructu quidem omnis arboris hujus horti אָכְלַת תְּאַכֵּל*” *comendo comedes* i.e. indubitate comedes, vel etiam libere comedes. *Exod. xxii, 20.* נִקְרָם יְנִקְרָם

[sic] *Vindicando vindicabitur* i.e. omnino vindicandus est.”

²⁴ Ibid., 34: “Quis enim quaeso! felicius, ac certius, mentem divinam interpretabitur, quam ipse Spiritus Sanctus? Aut unde de vi, & ambitu, dictionum, *Sacri Codicis*, tutius, judicabimus, quam ex ipsis locis *Biblicis*, aut eorundem, inter se, sedula collatione. Accedit his, quod, *Sacer Codex Vti*, unicus iste liber sit, qui nobis, ex puriori *Hebraismo*, superstest, unde adeo ejus stylum, & Vcum, phrasumque, efficaciam, non aliunde, metiri erat.”

²⁵ The literature on Christian Hebraism is quite extensive. Some of the key works are: William Mc Kane, *Selected Christian Hebraists* (New York, 1989); Frank E. Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992); Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (New York, 2003); Allison P. Coudert et al., *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia, 2004); Giuseppe Veltri et al., eds., *Gottes Sprache in der philologischen Werkstatt: Hebraistik vom 15. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Leiden, 2004). More recently: Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010); Guy G. Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010); as well as Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, *I have always loved the Holy Tongue*: Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship (Cambridge, Mass., 2011).

²⁶ See Achim Rohde, “400 Jahre Orientalistik/Hebraistik in Hamburg—Vom Akademischen Gymnasium zur Hamburger Universität,” in *Das Akademische Gymnasium: Bildung und Wissenschaft in Hamburg 1613–1883*, ed. Dirk Brietzke et al. (Berlin, 2013), 195–212.

²⁷ See C.W. Gleiss, *Esdras Edzardus, ein alter Hamburger Judenfreund* (Hamburg, 1870); also Martin Friedrich, *Zwischen Abkehr und Bekehrung. Die Stellung der deutschen evangelischen Theologie zum Judentum im 17. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1988), 107–23.

²⁸ I am admittedly taking some liberties with this statement. Edzardus had received most of his training at the *Johanneum* and at the *Gymnasium* before he studied at Leipzig, Wittenberg, and Tübingen. It is true, however, that Edzardus stayed some time in Basel to study under Buxtorf. See “Esdras Edzardus,” in *ADB* 5 (1875), 650–51; also on the patriarch

Lara (1602–1674).²⁹ Although Edzardus declined numerous offers to teach permanently at either the *Gymnasium* or somewhere else, his influence was nonetheless tremendous.³⁰ Every Friday morning he would surround himself with students from both the *Johanneum* and the *Gymnasium* and have them read passages from the Old Testament in combination with the grammatical explanations of R. Salomon Ben Melech's *Michlal Jophi* (1684).³¹ In the afternoon, the group was significantly larger, often comprising fifty to sixty people from all walks of life, each of them with their Hebrew Bibles and Greek New Testaments in hand, listening attentively to the rich elucidations of their teacher.³² News of these free lessons soon spread past the city walls and attracted young scholars from other parts of the country.³³ Among these dutiful students were such

of the Buxtorf dynasty, Johannes Buxtorf the Elder (1564–1629), see the monograph by Stephen G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1996).

- ²⁹ See Jutta Braden, *Hamburger Judenpolitik im Zeitalter lutherischer Orthodoxy, 1590–1710* (Hamburg, 2001), 188; on David Cohen de Lara, see Behrmann, *Hamburgs Orientalisten* (Hamburg, 1902), 34–36.
- ³⁰ The main reason for his refusal to take any permanent position was that Edzardus wanted to devote most of his energy to convert Jews and instruct converts from Judaism. For this purpose, he founded the so-called *Prosyleten Anstalt*, which continues to exist to this day. See Friedrich, *Zwischen Abkehr und Bekehrung*, 110–11; also Gleiss, *Esdras Edzardus*, 9–10; on the subject in general, see the excellent treatment by Elisheva Carlebach, entitled *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500–1750* (New Haven, 2001); more recently see Jutta Braden, “Esdras Edzards Judenmissionsanstalt von 1667 bis in die Zeit der Aufklärung,” in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, eds. Johann Anselm Steiger and Sandra Richter (Berlin, 2012), 143–55.
- ³¹ R. Salomo Ben Melech, *מכללי ימי*, seu *perfectio pulcritudinis, seu commentarius in loca selecta vocesque & res difficiliores S. Scripturae* (Amsterdam, 1684).
- ³² See Gleiss, *Esdras Edzardus*, 9–10.
- ³³ In his autobiography, Andreas Kempffer, a Lutheran minister from Billertshausen in Hesse, describes his experience as a student of Edzardus's as follows: “[Edzard] erinnerte sich, dass ich aus Stockholm einen Hebräischen Brief an ihn geschrieben. Ich wurde sogleich admittiert den *Michlal Jophi* zu lesen [...]. Hab mich in die 4½ Jahr in Hamburg aufgehalten, bey dem Herrn Edzard die *Rabbinos literales* gelesen, die in Buxtorfi Bibel stehen, den Kimchi, Aben Esra, Abarbanel. Den Raschi konnten wir nicht zu lesen bekommen, deswegen wir heimlich zu den Portugisen ging, umb den Raschi (ישר) über die Genesin zu lesen, darinn die Portugisen sonderlich versiret sein, die viele *Talmudica* treibet, welches Edzard leichtlich wissen konte auss der Pronunciation, worüber er zornig ward. Ich besänftige ihn aber bald, er solte nur betrachten die grosse Lust, die wir hetten. (Es war noch einer bey mir, Herr M. Starcke). ‘Was Raschi, sagte er, ‘wollet ihr rasen?’ Ich finde aber viel Gutes in demselben, sonderlich in dem *Pentateucho* [...]’; see Andreas

famous theologians and scholars as August Hermann Francke (1663–1727),³⁴ Hermann von der Hardt (1660–1746),³⁵ Johann Andreas Danz (1654–1727),³⁶ Johann Christoph Wolf, and Esdras Edzardus's own sons, Sebastian and Georg Eliezer, who would continue their father's legacy both within and outside the *Gymnasium*.³⁷ So, not surprisingly, Hamburg had acquired a certain reputation as a hub of Hebraism and Jewish studies. After Esdras Edzardus's death in 1708, the professorship of Oriental languages became the main forum of instruction in this field.

Reimarus's teaching record suggests that he was trying his best to continue the tradition of his famous teachers and become part of this golden age of Oriental studies in his native city.³⁸ A fundamental concern of his work was to help lay the propaedeutic foundations for future students of theology,³⁹ which

Kempffer, *Selbstbiographie*, ed. and intr. by Gustav Adolf Ludwig Baur (Leipzig, 1880), 16–17.

- 34 Francke remembers: "Darauf reisete ich nach Hamburg, weil es in Kiel mit dem Hebräischen nicht recht mit mir fortgewolt, da ich zwar etliche mahl einen neuen Anfang gemacht hatte, aber zu keiner gründlichen Wissenschaft darinnen durch den gemeinen methodum hatte gelangen mögen, da man erst sich mit der Grammatica und dem analysiren sehr lange auffhält, ehe man die Bibel selbst durchzulesen sich getrauet. Daher suchte ich bey dem Hrn L. Edzardo in Hamburg diesen Fehler zu ersetzen [...]. Ich kam also bei ihm mit Lesung des A.T. biss an den Propheten Esaiam, so viel ich mich erinnern kan und da ich nach zwey Monahten von den meinigen nach Hause gefordert ward, nahm ich von erwehnten Hrn L. Edzardo weitere Instruction, wie ich das Studium conti-nuire möchte. Da mir denn gerathen ward, erstlich lectionem cursoriam zu absolviren, und dann in secunda lectione grammaticam gründlicher zu erlernen, in tertia lectione den Glassium, in 4ta das Chaldäische, in 5ta das Michlal Jophi, in 6ta die biblia Buxtorfi zu tractiren [...]" quoted in Kempffer, *Selbstbiographie*, 31–32.
- 35 Ibid., 31; on van der Hardt in general, see *Deutsches Biographisches Archiv* 473, 165–328; also Ralph Häfner, "Tempelritus und Textkommentar. Hermann von der Hardts 'Morgenröte über der Stadt Chebron.' Zur Eigenart des literaturkritischen Kommentars im frühen 18. Jahrhundert," *Scientia Poetica* 3 (1999), 47–71 and his "Denn wie das buch ist, muß der leser seyn"—Allegorese und Mythopoeisis in den *Hohen und hellen Sinnbildern Jonae des Helmstedter Gelehrten Hermann von der Hardt*," in *Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter des Konfessionalismus*, ed. Herbert Jaumann (Wiesbaden, 2001), 183–201; Martin Mulsow, "Sintflut und Gedächtnis: Hermann von der Hardt und Nicholas-Antoine Boulanger," in *Sintflut und Gedächtnis*, ed. Jan Assmann et al. (Munich, 2006), 131–61.
- 36 Christian Siegfried, "Johann Andreas Danz," in *ADB* 4 (1876), 751.
- 37 Both Edzardi were teaching at the *Gymnasium* and were active in proselytizing efforts.
- 38 Behrmann, *Hamburgs Orientalisten*, 6.
- 39 As late as 1759, about one-third of the student body was planning to continue its study at one of the theological faculties. This conclusion can be drawn from a complaint, which Reimarus included in the *Catalogus preelectionum*: "Nam quae Collegae mei docent,

Buddeus, his former teacher at Jena, so elaborately described in his *Isagoge historico-theologica ad theologiam universam* (1727).⁴⁰ But whereas his colleagues Fabricius and Sebastian Edzardus took over the formidable task of endowing their students with the most important principles in natural theology or metaphysics, Reimarus took on the no less challenging task of providing them with all those tools required by a Lutheran *hermeneutica sacra*.⁴¹ These included not only the obvious instruction in Hebrew and Aramaic,⁴² but also lessons on the subject of textual criticism and the *critica sacra* with the hope that pious students would be better prepared than some of their predecessors from previous centuries to defend the doctrine of a *Hebraica veritas*. A proper exegesis of the revealed text, however, required not only the ability to translate passages and read commentaries, but also to contextualize them. For this purpose, the theologian has a number of subsidiary disciplines at his disposal. Among them are the *disciplinae instrumentales*, such as *rhetorica* or *logica*,⁴³ as well as the *disciplinae reales*, such as *geographia*, *chronologia*, and *historia*.⁴⁴

ejusmodi sunt, ut audire eorum publicas & privatas institutiones cum fructu possint debeatque cives Gymnasii ones, quocunque studia sua intenderint; mihi Hebraica docenti, demtis Jurium, Medicinae & Matheseos cultoribus, soli Theologi, vix tertia pars nostrorum, relinquuntur"; see *Gymnasii Hamburgensis index publice privatimque actorum a Paschate MDCCLVIII ad Pascha MDCCXL* [...] (Hamburg, 1760), 4.

⁴⁰ See "De propaedeumatibus theologicis," in Johann Franciscus Buddeus, *Isagoge historico-theologica ad theologiam universam singulasque eius partes* (Leipzig, 1727), 104–332.

⁴¹ "Finis Hermeneuticae Sacrae formalis vel est *internus*, scil. sensus Scripturae verus; vel *externus*, scil. interpretatio seu investigatio ejusdem. Ille est conceptus divini intellectus de mysteriis divinis scriptione nobis communicatus. Haec est legitima applicatio mediorum hermeneuticorum, institutum ad sensum illum inveniendum & pluribus magis perspicuis verbis repraesentandum atque declarandum"; see August Pfeiffer, *Opera Omnia quae extant Philologica* [...], tomus 2, *Hermeneutica Sacra, sive De Legitima Interpretatione Sacrarum Literarum Tractatus* (Utrecht, 1704), 633.

⁴² Ibid., 639: "Ingenium vero cum cultum requirat, debet Scripturae Interpres quoque esse πολυμαθῆς seu *pollere notitia & peritia* tum variarum Linguarum, non modo originalium, sed & aliarum, sive Textui modice inspersarum, sive ad originalium perfectionem & redintegrationem facientium [...]."

⁴³ Ibid., 660–61: "*Disciplinae instrumentales* sunt Grammatica, Rhetorica, & Logica. Illa facit ad ἐρμηνεία, & in specie ad conitionem analogiae & constructionis Grammaticae [...]."

⁴⁴ Ibid., 660–61: "*Disciplinae reales* vel sunt philosophicae, vel superiorum [...]. *Disciplinae philosophicae* faciunt tum ad cognitionem definitivam *notionum primarum*; tum ad illustrationem *circumstantiarum, temporis, loci, & modi* in Textu obviarum [...]. *Geographia* illustrat *circumstantiam loci* [...]. *Chronologia* illustrat *circumstantiam temporis* [...]. *Historia* (cuius duo quasi oculi *Geographia* & *Chronologia* sunt) facit ad cognitionem complementi prophetiarum in Scriptura contentarum, ad collationem synchronismo-

Aside from his introductory course in Hebrew, the most recurring course on Reimarus's record⁴⁵ belongs to this category, namely the study of Jewish antiquities, a field that sought to explore every aspect of ancient Hebrew life, through religious texts, rituals, artifacts, and architecture, as timeless expressions of Jewish culture.⁴⁶ This subject served a variety of purposes, both sacred and profane.⁴⁷ Above all, it provided a scholarly introduction to students into the world and culture of ancient Israel, which was especially important for those who contemplated a future career in theology. Hardly any of them would ever have the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of travelers from previous times and visit the famous sites of salvation history in person.⁴⁸ The importance of such a course was duly noted, even in the more remote corners of Protestant Germany. Georg Christoph Oertelius (1715–1790), headmaster at the *Gymnasium illustre* in Neustadt/Aisch, for example, pointed out that if

rum [...], & ad declarationem variarum circumstantiarum ritualium, quorsum spectat Historia rituum praesertim Ebraicorum [...].”

- 45 See Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Göttingen, 1979), 28–34.
- 46 The mass of treatises that were written on various aspects of ancient Jewish life is astounding. Its most impressive testimony is probably Blasius Ugolino's *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum* (Venice, 1744–69), with its staggering thirty-four volumes, basically a more voluminous counterpart to Graevius's *Thesaurus antiquitatum Romanarum* (Utrecht, 1694–99) or Gronovius's *Thesaurus antiquitatum Graecarum* (1697–1702). On this “antiquarianization of biblical scholarship,” see Peter N. Miller, “The ‘Antiquarianization’ of Biblical Scholarship and the London Polyglot Bible (1653–1657),” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001), 462–82; on the subject in general, see Chantal Grell et al., eds., *La République des lettres et l'histoire du Judaïsme antique, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles* (Paris, 1992); Guy G. Stroumsa, “Antiquitates Judaicae: Some Precursors of the Modern Study of Israelite Religion,” in *Jews, Antiquity, and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, ed. Hayim Lapin et al. (Bethesda, Md., 2003), 17–32; also John W. Rogerson, “Writing the History of Israel in the 17th & 18th Centuries,” in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls: Studies in Honour of A.S. Van der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. F. García Martínez et al. (New York, 1992), 217–27.
- 47 For the purpose and focus of this chapter, I shall exclude discussions of the political motivations for the study of Jewish antiquities (e.g., John Selden's *De Synedriis*). See Reid Barbour, *John Selden: Measures of the Holy Commonwealth in Seventeenth-Century England* (Toronto, 2003), 295–342. On this subject in general, see Kalman Neuman, “Political Hebraism and the Early Modern ‘Respublica Hebraeorum’: On Defining the Field,” *Hebraic Political Studies* 1, no. 1 (2005), 57–70, as well as Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, 42–57. The most sweeping account is Gerald J. Toomer's masterpiece *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. (New York, 2009); see esp. vol. 2, 692–788.
- 48 F. Thomas Noonan, *The Road to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Age of Discovery* (Philadelphia, 2007).

students did not receive proper instructions about the *antiquitates Hebraicae*, then “the entire Levitic culture, the tabernacle and its parts, the altars, the main halls, the sacrifices” would become simply “worthless images and figures in their minds, whenever they read and hear about them.”⁴⁹ More importantly, however, was that ignorance about the subject was ultimately an impediment for a proper understanding of the words and deeds of Jesus and the apostles. “How many forms of expression are taken from the written monuments of the divinely inspired authors of the Old Testament,” asked Oertelius, “how many times are instances from the Old Testament referenced in the New, and how frequently are allusions to the rites of the Jews made?” Neustadt/Aisch was certainly not the place where ideas flourished, great works were written, or famous scholars were regulars, and Oertelius could only marvel at the accomplishments and skills of an Esdras Edzardus, Fabricius, or Wolf from afar.⁵⁰

But the principles of the *hermeneutica sacra* and a typological interpretation of the Old Testament were shared by all Protestants, regardless of their whereabouts. It did not take a formidable philologist to recognize that words such as ἀλληλουϊά [hallelujah], phrases such as βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ [kingdom of God], and even proverbs such as εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστιν κάμηλον διὰ τρυπῆματος ῥαφίδος διελθεῖν [...] [it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle], as well as numerous ceremonies that are mentioned in the New Testament, had their roots in the world of biblical and post-biblical Israel.⁵¹ Since Protestant inter-

49 See Georg Christoph Oertelius, “De usu Antiquitarum Hebraicarum in Scholis insigni,” in *Selecta scholastica, in quibus programmata ex scholis sacri, philologici, philosophici et historici argumenti eaque melioris notiae coeunt*, vol. 1, ed. Johann Gottlieb Bidermann (Nuremberg, 1744), 167–68: “Iam vero quam facile fit, ut si v.t. oracula perlegant pueri sine duce atque magistro, falsi aliquid sibi fingant & concipient animo; ut inanes sibi repraesentent species & figuratas, cum, quae tabernaculo eiusque partibus, de altaribus, de atriis, de sacrificiis, uno verbo, de universo cultu Levitico memoriae prodita sunt, legunt audiuntque.”

50 Ibid., 168: “[...] quod nec in apostolorum, nec in ipsius IESU CHRISTI scriptis & dictis inoffenso pede poterunt progredi, nisi aliqua antiquitatum Hebraicarum notitia fuerint praemuniti [...] quot loquendi formulae ex monumentis virorum θεοπνεύστων v.t. petitae, quam multae res v.t. locutionibus N.T. exprimuntur, et quam frequenter ad Iudeorum ritus alluditur?”

51 “[...] Illae sunt vel quae Originem Hebraicam aut Syriacam tenent veluti ἀλληλούϊα [sic] Apoc. XIX. 1.3.4. quod est Hebraeorum יְהִי הַלֵּל laudate Deum [...]. Dantur Phrases in Novo Testamento, quae receptae in Synagoga atque ex ea commode explicantur, ut illa βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, regnum coelorum Matth. III.2. quod idem ac βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ regnum Dei. Marc. I. 15. Solent enim Doctores Judaei coelum pro Deo sumere, uti tritum illud שֶׁמֶם שְׁמִים נְתַחֲנָה profanatur nomen coelorum DEI. Sic integra pharsi מִלְכֹוֹת שְׁמִים שְׁמִים נְתַחֲנָה notat obedientiam, quam subditi puro corde soli Deo, non homini cuiquam, exhibent [...]. Insuper Proverbiae sive sententiae obscuriores, quae a vulgo ad

preters viewed "Christ as the purpose of the law"⁵² and stressed the doctrine of a *concordia* [harmony] between Old and New Testaments,⁵³ the *obscuritas Legis* [obscurity of the Law], generated by the *velamen Mosis* [veil of Moses],⁵⁴ could be penetrated if the *analogia fidei* [analogy of faith]⁵⁵ served as the guiding principle of exegesis. Although the potential danger of an overinterpretation of Jewish rituals was acknowledged and transgressions reprimanded,⁵⁶

certum aliquid significandum adhibebantur. Exemplum exstat Matth. xix. 24. facilius est κάμηλον διὰ τρυπήματος ράφιδος διελθεῖν ut transeat camelus per foramen acus &c. quo impossibilitas rei, de qua sermo, indicatur: quomodo Talm. Babyl. tr. ברכות f. LV. c. II. f. אַתְּ דָלָא מִחוֹן לֵיה לְאַינְשׁ לְאַדְלָא דְלָא פִּילָא דְלָא בְּקֻפָּא דְמַחְטָה תְּזַע scito homini non ostendi vel palmarum auream vel Elephantem qui per foramen acus intrat: hoc est rem impossiblem [...]. Habes loca N. Testamenti, quae diserte ritum ceu receptum in Gente Judaica memorant, cuius tamen certum vestigium in V. non conspicitur; sunt dein alia, quae ad Ceremonias Judaicas alludunt [...]; see Thomas Goodwin, *Moses et Aaron, seu civiles et ecclesiastici ritus antiquorum hebraeorum* [...] (Frankfurt, 1710), 8–21.

⁵² See Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae, Seu De Sermone Sacrarum Literarum* [...], pars 2 (Leipzig, 1695), 8: "Finis enim legis est Christus. ille solus est illa margarita, aut thesaurus: quem si in hoc agro Domini invenimus, satis bene sumus negotiati."

⁵³ Ibid., 5–6: "Lex & Promissio, aut Evangelium, videntur pugnare non intelligenti. Eorum concordia & discrimen, est certissima clavis totius Scripturae."

⁵⁴ Ibid., 606: "Velamen Mosis, est quaedam obscuritas Legis, ut ejus primarius, verus, ac genuinus sensus aut scopus, non plene aut perspicue perspici possit. Id vero duplex est [...]. Nam non solum Moses sibi imponebat velamen, agens cum populo: Ex. 34. v. 33. sed etiam erat, & est adhuc velamen, super omnia non-renatorum corda [...]."

⁵⁵ See Salomon Glassius, *Philologia sacra* [...] (Leipzig, 1713), 498: "Est autem fidei analogia seu regula nihil aliud, quam summa quaedam coelestis doctrinae, ex apertissimis Scripturae locis collecta [...]."

⁵⁶ "Man glaubet dadurch die Weisheit Gottes besonders zu verherrlichen, wenn man sich überredet, daß unter dem Schattenwerk der Ceremonien sehr grosse Geheimnisse seyn verborgen gewesen [...]. Wenn man gewisse Stellen des N. Testaments, die von diesen Gebräuchen handeln, vergleicht, so muß man gestehen, daß etwas wahres an dieser Meynung sey. Wenn man aber auf der andern Seite bedenket, was für ein erschrecklicher Misbrauch mit diesen Vorbildern ist getrieben worden, so kann man nicht Vorsicht genug gebrauchen, um die wahren Vorbilder von den erdichteten sorgfältig zu unterscheiden, damit man nicht, anstatt über die heilige Schrift ein Licht auszubreiten, sie vielmehr verdunkle. Es ist in der That recht sehr zu bedauren, daß durch diese übertriebene Liebe zu den Vorbildern manche Ausleger der heiligen Schrift, vornehmlich diejenigen, die von der Coccejanischen Schule sind, sich haben verleiten lassen, nicht nur in den geringsten Kleinigkeiten der Stiftshütte und des Tempels, in den Kleidern der Priester und Leviten, in allen und jeden Satzungen, die zum ceremonialischen Gottesdienst gehörten, sondern auch in den meisten Begebenheiten des A. Testaments und den Hauptpersonen, die dabey vorkommen, etwas auf die Kirche des N. Testaments anspielendes zu erblicken. Sie sind mit demjenigen, was die heilige Schrift von diesen Gebräuchen meldet, nicht

Protestant exegetes believed that they nonetheless comprised the important outer shell of an even more important Christian truth. Few could have presented a more convincing plea for the study of Jewish antiquities than Conrad Melius (1666–1733),⁵⁷ headmaster of the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hersfeld, whose *Antiquarius sacer* along with Adriaan Reland's *De usu antiquitatum sacrarum*⁵⁸ became the classic rallying cries for the field:

Our salvation has Jewish roots; all books of both the Old and New Testament were written by Jews: the θεόπνευστοι [the divinely inspired authors] lived among Jews: they wrote for the most part, albeit not everything, for [...] Jews ἐν διασπορᾷ [in the diaspora]; our chief prophet, Jesus, spoke before Jewish assemblies; he strode through the land of the Jews; he spoke the language of the Jews [...] and he proclaimed the mysteries of his kingdom in a dialect that was used among the Jews then, and in parables, which was then also their way of speaking; from this it is abundantly clear that a diligent examination of Jewish antiquities is by no means of little importance.⁵⁹

zufrieden gewesen, sondern sie haben oft die abgeschmacktesten Fabeln und Träume der Juden zu ihren Vorhaben angewandt und in den unreinen Pfützen der Talmudisten herumgewühlte, um etwas zum Schmuck ihres typischen Lehrgebäudes dienliches herauszusuchen. Daher sind so viele unfruchtbare Abhandlungen von den Decken und Vorhängen der Stiftshütte und dem übrigen Geräthe des Heiligthums entstanden, daß man oft nicht weiß, was man von den Verfassern derselben denken soll [...]" see Samuel Mursinna, "Vorrede des Herausgebers," in Johann Simonis, *Vorlesungen über die Jüdischen Alterthümer nach Anleitung Hadr. Relands* [...] (Halle, 1769), xii–xiv.

57 Ulrich Schoenborn, "... ich sehe die Fußstapfen der Providentz Gottes": zum Wirken des hessischen Theologen Conrad Mel (1666–1733) in Mitau, Memel und Königsberg (Berlin, 2006).

58 Adriaan Reland, "De usu antiquitatum sacrarum[...]," in *Clarissimorum virorum orationes selectae quae partim argumentorum praestantia, partim dicendi elegantia sese commendant*, ed. Johann Erhard Kappius (Leipzig, 1722), 114–34.

59 Conrad Melius, *Antiquarius sacer, quamplurima dubia atque obscuria Sacrae Scripturae dicta, ex statu ecclesiastico, politico, militari atque oeconomico [...]* (Frankfurt, 1729), 2: "Salus nostra ex Judaeis; Omnes libri, tum veteris, tum novi Testamenti, a Judaeis sunt scripti: vixerunt Viri θεόπνευστοι inter Judaeos: scripseruntque si non omnem, faltem maximam partem, ad Judaeos ἐν διασπορᾷ [...]: Omnes conciones summus noster propheta, Jesus, habuit ad Judaeos: Judaeorum terram trivit: Judaeorum lingua usus [...]: dialecto apud Judaeos tum temporis usitata, imo methodo tunc usitata, per parabolas, Regni sui praedicavit mysteria: adeo ut ex inde facile constet, haud infimum rerum momentum, in diligenti collatione Antiquitatum Judaicarum, situm esse [...]."

Therefore, not surprisingly, courses on the subject were offered in theological faculties throughout Germany, partly also since the guidance of a teacher was thought to prevent students from becoming too immersed in the study of Talmud or Midrash,⁶⁰ two very common sources in the field.⁶¹ Adriaan Reland's seminal *Antiquitates sacrae veterum Hebraeorum*⁶² seemed the natural, if not even the only, textbook of choice for an instructor. With its over five hundred pages, it could make the daring claim of offering a survey that captured the essence of a subject producing a sheer, never-ending flood of books and studies. Not surprisingly, it had become the standard textbook in the field, went through numerous editions, and served Reimarus well during his own student days at the *Gymnasium* where Wolf had taught the same course.⁶³ At the Royal

60 John Lightfoot's *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae* was certainly the apogee of a Christian apologetic use of rabbinic and Talmudic sources in New Testament exegesis. See John Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 2 (Utrecht, 1699), 241–742; for an earlier precursor to Lightfoot, see Joanna Weinberg, “A Sixteenth-Century Hebraic Approach to the New Testament,” in *History of Scholarship: A Selection of Papers from the Seminar on the History of Scholarship Held Annually at the Warburg Institute*, ed. Christopher Ligota et al. (New York, 2006), 231–50.

61 The fear among Hebraists of being accused as Judaizers prevailed at least for some time and still in 1713 Adriaan Reland saw the need to diffuse such concerns: “[...] non est quod quenquam nomen Iudaicum deterreat. Illa fuit infelicitas priorum temporum, quum, qui ad Hebraeas litteras animum appellerent, ad Iudeorum partibus stare crederentur. Nunc alia tempora vivimus, quibus nihil fere scriptorum Iudaicorum est reconditum, quod non legatur ad Christianis & intelligatur. Tantum vero abest causae superstitionis Iudaicae hinc firmamentum constitui, ut numquam magis nudum latus Christianis praebuerit quam his ipsis diebus”; see Adriaan Reland, “De usu Antiquitatum sacrarum [...] habita Traiecti ad Rhenum ad diem 11. Febr. Anno MDCCXIII [...]”, in *Clarissimorum Virorum Orationes Selectae*, ed. Johann Erhard Kapp (Leipzig, 1722), 117–18. Such concerns may also have played a role in Esdras Edzardus’s outrage when two of his students were secretly seeking instruction from Sephardic Jews (n. 33).

62 Adriaan Reland, *Antiquitates sacrae veterum Hebraeorum* (Utrecht, 1708).

63 According to the *Catalogus praelectionum*, Wolf first read about Reland's *Antiquitates sacrae veterum Hebraeorum* during the academic year 1714–15. See *Catalogus praelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXIV usque ad veris initium MDCCXV publice et privativ fuerunt habita [...]* (Hamburg, 1715), 3* (unpaginated). We still have a manuscript fragment entitled *Wolfii Analecta ad Relandi Antiquitates Hebraicas* [SUB HH, Cod. theol. 1508]. It seems questionable, however, that these notes are what remains of Wolf's lecture on the subject. Wolf was a professor at the *Gymnasium* only until 1716, when he became senior pastor at Saint Catherine's. The manuscript, however, references a number of works that were published after 1716.

Library in Copenhagen, a still unpublished manuscript is available, whose title page reads:⁶⁴

*Observationes
ad
Hadriani Relandi
Antiquitates S[acrae]
Veterum Hebraeorum
datae
Celeb[errimo] H.S. Reimaro, LL. OO. PPP. Gymnasii Hamburg[i].*

Jo.Fabricii. 1729.

The manuscript is 164 pages long and corresponds to Reland's work in its entirety. It seems likely that Reimarus dictated these notes privately to one of his first-year students, Johannes Fabricius (not to be confused with Reimarus's mentor Johann Albert Fabricius).⁶⁵ Yet, it remains somewhat unclear whether these pages were the full equivalent of the lecture series Reimarus gave on the same subject during the academic year 1728–29. In his textbook, Reland divided the subject of Jewish antiquities into four segments: *de locis sacris* [about the holy sites], *de personis sacris* [about the holy people], *de rebus sacris* [about sacred matters], and *de temporibus sacris* [about holy feasts]. Even if Reimarus had tried to hurry through the entire Reland, it would have taken him more than just one full academic year. A glance at the *Catalogus praelectionum*, however, may offer a possible solution to the dilemma. Accordingly, Reimarus taught publicly throughout the entire academic year about the *rebus sacris*,⁶⁶ but held private lectures on the same subject as well, without specifying what segment he chose. It is therefore possible that he selected for his private lectures a different section of the book so that it would be worthwhile for his students to sign up for both.⁶⁷ Since it is certain, however, that Reimarus focused

⁶⁴ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Observationes ad Hadriani Relandi antiquitates S. Veterum Hebraeorum*, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Kall. 311, 4°.

⁶⁵ Wilhelm Sillem, ed., *Die Matrikel des Akademischen Gymnasiums in Hamburg, 1613–1883* (Hamburg, 1891), 102, no. 2251.

⁶⁶ *Catalogus praelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXXIX. usque ad veris initium MDCCXXX. publice et privatum fuerunt habita [...]* (Hamburg, 1730), 1*: “[...] publice non modo Psalmorum interpretationem Deo propitio ad finem perduxit, sed & Sacrificiorum Leviticorum rationem praeente Relando copiosius explicavit [...]”

⁶⁷ Ibid., 1*: “Privatum [...] reliquam & maximam partem Antiquitatum sacrarum, quae ex publicis praelectionibus reservata in privatas erat, eodem Relando Duce, exposuit.” As

on the *res sacrae* in his public lectures, it is important to take a more careful look at that particular segment to provide a lens into Reimarus's teaching.

Ancient Judaism in the Classroom

In *res sacrae*, Reland basically concentrates on the various kinds of Jewish sacrifices, which are described in detail in Leviticus.⁶⁸ According to Reland, the Jewish sages in the Gemara and Sifra identify seven different types of sacrifices: (1) *holocausta* [burnt offering], (2) *sacrificia piacularia* [purification offering], (3) *sacrificia pro delicto* [trespass offering], (4) *sacrificia salutaria* [peace-offering], (5) *primogenita animantium* [firstborn offering], (6) *decimas eorundem* [tithe], and (7) *agnum paschalem* [paschal lamb], which, as Reland suggests, could take the form of public or private sacrifices.⁶⁹ Unlike private offerings, the victim in a public offering had to be a male domestic animal.⁷⁰ According to Reland, it was generally a *bos* [bull], *ovis* [sheep], or *capra* [goat].⁷¹ This offering did not necessarily have to be killed, as was the case with the *hircus emissarius* [scapegoat] on the Day of Atonement.⁷² He points out that Jews distinguish between the קדשי קדשים [the holiest of the holy] and the קדשים קלים [sacrifices of minor sanctity]. In the category of the most important sacrifices, Reland records the *holocausta*, the *sacrificia piacularia*, the *sacrificia pro delicto*, and only the *sacrificia salutaria publica*, as opposed to the *sacrificia salutaria*

noted in the previous chapter, instructors at the *Gymnasium illustre* offered both public and private lectures to students, and subsidized their salary through the private lectures.

68 Lev. 1–10; see, for example, Christian Eberhart, *Studien zur Bedeutung der Opfer im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen, 2002).

69 Adriaan Reland, *Antiquitates Sacrae*, 291–92: “Sed Judaei in *Siphra* & *Gem. Rosch has-schana*. 4:1. & alibi vulgo quatuor recensent tam publica quam privata עולה חטאת וASHAM ושלמים. 1. Holocasta. 2. Sacrificia piacularia. 3. Sacrificia pro delicto. & 4. Salutaria. Quibus addunt tria privata, דומים לשלים, quae similia sunt salutaribus, בבור מעשר ופסח. 5. Primogenita animantium. 6. Decimas eorundem. & 7. Agnum paschalem.”

70 Ibid., 292: “In publicis, a Deo jussis, numquam animal sexus foeminei oblatum fuit.”

71 Ibid., 304: “Munda haec esse animalia debuerunt & quidem domesticis. Sunt enim animalia domestica & חיות fera. Ex domesticis tria sunt genera animalium mundorum, quae comedere Judaeis licebat eademque sacrificare, *bos* videlicet, *ovis*, & *capra*.”

72 Ibid., 347: “Ex publicis nulla comburebantur praeter 1. שעיר ים הרים [sic] hircum die expiationis offerendum, socium hirci emissarii [...]”; on the *hircus emissarius*, see also Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria sive introductio in notitiam scriptorum qui antiquitates Hebraicas Graecas Romanas et Christianas scriptis illustrant*, 3rd ed. (Hamburg, 1760), 437–38.

privata, which fell under ther category of the קדשים קלים. ⁷³ For a skilled Hebraist such as Reimarus, this type of material would provide much substance simply from a philological perspective alone.

What most likely happened in Reimarus's classroom is that he slowly read a passage from Reland to his students in class and then supplemented it with his own notes and observations. As one might expect from a dutiful adherent to the principles of a *hermeneutica sacra*, the subject matter of the sacrifices and the scholarship surrounding it enjoy only a marginal position in the focus of his lecture. When extending beyond Reland's textbook account, Reimarus incorporates only the most important scholarly works in the field into his lecture, such as William Outram's *De sacrificiis libri duo*⁷⁴ or Johannes Saubert's *De sacrificiis veterum conlectanea historico-philologica*.⁷⁵ The same observation can be made about Jewish sources consulted in Reimarus's notes. He occasionally refers briefly to Maimonides's *De sacrificiis liber* and Isaac Abravanel's *Exordium seu prooemium commentariorum in Leviticum*,⁷⁶ two standard works in the field, translated into Latin by the Jewish convert Ludovicus Compiègne de Veil (1655–1679).⁷⁷ Profane classical authors are almost completely absent. Occasionally, we may find a reference to the mighty Cicero. In general, the exclusivity of sources consulted by Reimarus for his lecture represents a very

73 Adriaan Reland, *Antiquitates sacrae*, 296–97: “Distinguunt Judaei inter Sacrificia sanctissima, et etiam קדשים קלים minus sancta [...] ideo quatuor species sacrificiorum sanctissimorum statuuntur. 1. Holocausta omnia. 2. Sacrificia piacularia omnia. 3. Sacrificia pro delicto omnia. 4. Sacrificia salutaria, non omnia, sed duntaxat publica. Reliquia [...] minus sancta appellantur.”

74 William Outram, *De sacrificiis libri duo; quorum altero explicantur omnia Iudeorum, nonnulla gentium profanarum sacrificia: altero sacrificium Christi* [...] (London, 1677).

75 Johannes Saubert, *De sacrificiis veterum conlectanea historico-philologica, et miscella critica* [...] (Leiden, 1699).

76 Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, vol. 1, 630: “Prooeum in Levit. Lud. Compiegne de Veil versioni tract. Maimonidei de Sacrific. adjecit, hebr. & Lat. Hunc Henr. Iac. van Bashuysen Campeigne de Veille appellat eumque praefatt. Abarbanelis in singulos Mosis libb. edidisse & Lat. vertisse ait in praef. ad comm. Abarban. in Pentat. Ego vero eum praefat. in Leviticum solam vertisse memini”; on Isaac Abravanel, see Benzion Netanyahu, *Don Isaac Abravanel: Statesman and Philosopher* 5th ed. (Ithaca, N.Y., 1998), as well as Eric Lawee, *Isaac Abarbanel's Stance toward Tradition* (Albany, N.Y., 2001).

77 Moses Maimonides, *De sacrificiis liber: acceserunt Arabanelis exordium, seu prooemium commentariorum in Leviticum, et Majemonidae Tractatus de consecratione calendarum et de ratione intercalandi / quae ex Hebraeo convertit in sermonem Latinum & notis illustravit* Ludovicus de Compiegne de Veil (London, 1683); on Maimonides, see Herbert A. Davidson, *Moses Maimonides: The Man and His Works* (New York, 2005); also Sarah Stroumsa, *Maimonides in His World: Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker* (Princeton, 2011).

far cry from the sheer mass of material that one encounters in Fabricius's *Bibliotheca antiquaria* on practically every aspect of the subject.⁷⁸ Instead, Reimarus's lecture seems to be driven by the desire to convey to his students that "Christ [...] appears in the shadows of ceremonies not just due to the fruitless play of the mind, but as signs from God."⁷⁹ Essentially, Reimarus's lecture remains safely within the confines of a Christological interpretation.

His students quickly learned what this meant when Reimarus reached the topic of the *sacrificia piacularia*, or purification offerings. According to the Danish theologian and *savant* Johannes Lundius (1638–1686),⁸⁰ analyzing the difference between נָתַן [purification offering] and מַשְׁאֵן [trespass offering] had been discussed at length in contemporary scholarship, often to no avail.⁸¹ The subject posed such an obstacle that even Lundius, *a vir eruditus, laboriosus et in hebraica antiquitate versatissimus* [a learned and diligent man, well versed in Hebrew antiquity], saw no point in even trying.⁸² To approach this analysis, one needed to examine what kind of transgressions merited purification offerings. Reland, for example, highlighted that נָתַן [sin, purification

78 Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 485–90.

79 *Catalogus praelectionum . . . initio A.C. MDCCXXIX. usque ad veris initium MDCCXXX.*, 1*: "[...] quoad licet investigare, Christum vero imprimis Servatorem nostrum in umbris istis caeremoniarum, non tam vano ingenii lusu, quam divinis indicis invenire allaborarit."

80 See Carsten Erich Carstens, "Johannes Lundius," in *ADB* 19 (1884), 636.

81 For one such attempt, see Johann Frischmuth, *Dissertatio de unica Messiae pro reatu se tradentis hostia ad Psalm. XL: 7. sqq. in Thesaurus Theologicus-Philologicus sive Sylloge dissertationum elegantiorum ad selectiora et illustriora Veteris et Novi Testamenti loca a theologis protestantibus*, pars 1 (Amsterdam, 1701), 627–28: "Ebraei alias distinguunt inter נָתַן, quod Graecis ἀμάρτια est, & Latine *sacrificium pro peccato* verti solet; & inter מַשְׁאֵן, quod Graeci πλημμελέαν [sic] vocant, Latini *sacrificium pro delicto*. Quia tamen in quolibet alias delicto & peccatum, vel aberratio, & reatus deprehenditur, non immerito quaeritur, ecquomodo haec a se invicem distinguantur?" For a more recent attempt, see Adrian Schenker, "Der Unterschied zwischen Sündopfer 'Chattat' und Schuldopfer 'Ascham' im Licht von Lv. 5,17–19 und 5,1–6," in *Pentateuchal and Deuteronomic Studies*, ed. C. Brekelmans et al. (Leuven, 1990), 115–23; also Albert Baumgarten, "'Hatta't' sacrifices," *Revue Biblique* 103 (1996), 337–42.

82 Johannes Lundius, *Die Alten Jüdischen Heilighümer/ Gottesdienste und Gewohnheiten* [...] (Hamburg², 1704), 599: "Was zwischen diesen beyden für Unterscheid sey/ist aus der Schrift über alle Maasse schwer zu sehen/und stimmen weder die Hebräer noch Christen hierin mit einander überein [...]. Aber keiner von allen hat es unserer Meynung nach getroffen: nicht Abarbenel [...] nicht Osiander [...] nicht Bonfrer [...] nicht Saubert. Joseph. Philo und andere [...] nicht Capell [...]. Je mehr und genauer wir der Sache nachdencken/ ie schwerer deucht es uns zu treffen zu seyn/ und halten es dahero für vergeblich mit allezu vielen Nachsinnen sich hie aufzuhalten."

offering] should be translated as “sacrifices of atonement,” since the Talmud appeared to use the term interchangeably with שָׁגַנָה [error, mistake], which seemed much less severe than עַשְׂפָּה [sin, rebellion] or מִרְדֹּתָה [rebellion], both of which implied much more of a conscious and intentional effort.⁸³ Reimarus would not have needed to go very far to find some key publications on such philological questions. Aside from the mandatory first glance into Fabricius’s *Bibliographia antiquaria*, he could simply have referred back to his brief student days at Wittenberg, where one of his teachers, the Hebraist Johann Christoph Wichmannshausen (1663–1727),⁸⁴ had published three dissertations on this subject.⁸⁵

The actual procedure of the purification offering itself required a similarly intricate analysis. The offering generally involved a process of more or less specified steps, which may have varied slightly. According to Reland, these included the *constitutio victimae ante faciem Dei* [bringing the victim before God], the *impositio manuum* [imposition of the hand onto the victim], the *agitatio* [the waving], the *jugulatio* [slaughtering], the *sanguinis exceptio* [collecting of the blood], the *varii modi spargendi sanguinem* [various forms of sprinkling the blood], the *excoriatio* [the skinning of the animal], the *dissectio & lotio* [dissection and cleaning], the *delatio ad altare* [bringing to the altar], the *salitio* [salting], the *comestio* [consumption], and the *combustio* [the burning].⁸⁶ But if students at the *Gymnasium illustre* had hoped that their teacher Reimarus would address and dissect such issues, their hope was in vain. Reading through Reimarus’s elucidations of the topic, it seems as if Reimarus took Lundius’s advice at face value, because he essentially ignores both the linguistic problem and the significant body of scholarly literature it had generated. In fact, he seems hardly interested in a portrayal of the sacrificial practice at all. Instead, he provides a lengthy theological discourse, in which he stresses the Christological significance of the subject:

⁸³ Reland, *Antiquitates sacrae*, 344: “Vocem תָאֵטָה explicant in *Gem. Hier. Joma.* 40.4. & *Siphra* fol. *167. 1. per תְוַיָּאָש errors, veluti עַשְׂפָּה per מִרְדֹּתָה rebelliones [...]. Certe qui non per errorem, sed sciens prudensque peccaverat, ἔκουσίως ἀμαρτάνων, non expiabatur culpa ejus ullo sacrificio piaculari, οὐκ ἔτι περὶ ἀμαρτιῶν ἀπολέίπεται θυσίᾳ [...]”

⁸⁴ See Giuseppe Veltri and Gianfranco Miletto, “Die Hebraistik in Wittenberg (1502–1813): Von der ‘Lingua Sacra’ zur Semistik,” in *Gottes Sprache in der philologischen Werkstatt: Hebraistik vom 15. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Giuseppe Veltri and Gerold Necker (Leiden, 2004), 93.

⁸⁵ Johann Christoph Wichmannshausen, *De טַבָּח: sive sacrificio piaculari pro noxa offerendo* [...] (Wittenberg, 1716–17).

⁸⁶ Reland, *Antiquitates Sacrae*, 306–36.

The purification offerings refer to Christ more than all other [offerings] [...]; all sacrifices had to be brought to Jerusalem before God [...]: chapter 1 § 9 and 15: Christ himself willingly traveled to Jerusalem and offered himself as a sacrifice: Jn. 18:1 and 20:18; Lk. 18:31. The hands were put onto the head of the victim as if the sins were transferred to it: chapter 12 § 16. Likewise hands were laid upon Christ, the head of the Church, so that he would become sin-offering for us: Lev. 4:4–15 and Lev. 16:21f.; Jn. 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24. Sheep and lambs served mainly as sacrificial beasts. Christ in fact exhibited the submission of these [animals] during his agony: 1 Pet. 2:20f.; Lk. 23:34. Just as the victim was elevated and exposed to God in the offering *הַמְּרֹאָתָה* [offering], so was Christ lifted up on the cross: Jn. 12:32–33. Just as the killing [of the animal] was inevitable [...], Christ also had to die a cruel death on the cross: Isa. 53:8.; Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:32. The victims had to be without blemishes: chapter 1 § 11 [...]; Christ was also free from any sin: 1 Pet. 2:19; Heb. 7:26. [...]. Just as there was special power in the sacrificial blood: chapter 1 §. 22, so the purification of our sins is also attributed to the blood of Christ: Heb. 9:14; 1 Jn. 1:7 [...].⁸⁷

Although an attentive reader might still be able to discern in this passage glimpses of the somewhat obscured procedure of the ancient Jewish offering, ironically, Reimarus's attempt to remove the *velamen Mosis* has almost completely diluted the ritualistic aspect of the religion of the Old Testament. We learn, for example, nothing about the difference between the offering of a male goat and a bull, which Lundius explains elaborately, or the imposition of the hand and the confession of the sin, or how and where the priest sprinkled

87 Reimarus, *Observationes*, 105–6: “Sacrificia piacularia prae ceteris respiciebant Christum [...]. Omnia sacrificia Hierosolymas deferenda erant, [...] v. C. 1. §.9 et 15: Christus ipse sponte proficiscitur Hierosolymas, et sacrificandum se praebet. Jo. 18.1. etiam 20.18. Luc. 18.31. Victimae imponebantur manus in caput, ut in illam quasi transferrentur peccata. v. c. 12 § 16. Sic Christo, qui est Caput Ecclesiae, inventae sunt Manus, quo ipso factus est piaculum pro nobis. v. Lev. 4. 4.15. it. Lev. 16. 21. sq. coll. Jo. 1.29. 2. Cor. 5. 21.1. Pet. 2.24. Victimis inserviebant praecipue oves et agni. Christus autem eorum patientiam in passione sua repraesentavit. 1. Pet. 2.20 sq. Luc. 23.34. Victima sacrificanda agitabatur seu Deo offerebatur per *הַמְּרֹאָתָה* sic Christus sublatus est in crucem Jo. 12. 32.33. Mactatio necessaria erat in sacrificiis [...]: sic et Christus mori debuit morte cruenta. Jes. 53.8. coll. Gen. 2.17. Rom. 6.32. Sicut porro animalia sacrificanda debuerunt esse sine maculis, Capp. 1. §. 11. sub. fin. sic et Christus purus fuit ab omni peccato. 1. Pet. 2. 19. Hebr. 7.26 [...]. In sanguine autem praecipua vis erat sacrificii v. capp. 1. §. 22. sic et sanguini Christi praecipue tribuitur purificatio a peccatis nostris. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Jo. 1.7 [...].”

the collected blood, or what prayer of invocation was said.⁸⁸ To be sure, there was plentiful scholarly literature on such details that would have provided an abundance of material for prolonged classroom discussions and analysis.⁸⁹ A prime matter for debate, for example, was whether the imposition of the hand simply symbolized that the victim was selected as a ransom or if the sin was actually transferred into its body. As a former student and protégé of the two master compilers of Hebraica and scholarly literature Wolf and Fabricius, a prolonged bibliographical excursus on such questions would hardly have come as a surprise. Instead, Reimarus adheres strictly to the principles of a *hermeneutica sacra* and remains within the narrow confines of Luther's *Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*. He reads and interprets the "Synagogue" through the lens of the "Church." Unless the ancient Jewish rituals have a typological and symbolic relevance, Reimarus asserts that they would be the most absurd expression of superstition:

As these accounts are the clearest proof that Levitic customs fulfilled a symbolic and typical role, we can hardly wonder enough about the blindness of the Jews, since they believe that their sins can be redeemed in this way [...]. Even if sacrifices were used, to the most prudent of the gentiles the conviction that an angry Deity could be pleased with the blood of some animals seems most absurd.⁹⁰

Such words, which fit perfectly into a Christian apologetic tradition of anti-Jewish polemics, could easily have been uttered by Esdras or Sebastian Edzardus.⁹¹ The rejection of the implications of the *sensus literalis* united Christian orthodoxy with proponents of the Enlightenment, who denounced the religion of the Old Testament as the crude and brute expression of

⁸⁸ Lundius, *Die Alten Jüdischen Heiligtümer*, 600–610.

⁸⁹ Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 488–90 and 509–12.

⁹⁰ Reimarus, *Observationes*, 106–7: "Qae cum sint apertissima [...] ratio cultus Levitici Symbolica et Typica sit, mirari satis vix possumus, caecitatem Judaeorum, quod [...] quaecunque via expiari sua posse peccata opinantur [...]. Etiamsi sacrificia usurparentur, tame[n] absurdissima persuasio foret Deum iratum brutorum sanguine placari posse, sicut et sapientissimis gentilium visum est."

⁹¹ See, for example, Hans Joachim Schoeps, *The Jewish-Christian Argument: A History of Theologies in Conflict*, trans. by David E. Green (New York, 1963); Samuel Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy: From the Earliest Times to 1789*, ed. William Horbury (Tübingen, 1996).

superstition.⁹² At the time of his Reland lecture, Reimarus was still under the influence of orthodoxy. When he was a student at Jena and Wittenberg, the principles of a *hermeneutica sacra* had been hammered into his mind, and during his first few years as a teacher at the *Gymnasium illustre*, he preached and practiced what he had been taught as a student himself. Indicative of his “orthodoxy” is his lecture *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum*, which he held throughout the academic year 1731–32. In regard to the ceremonial law, Reimarus asserts that

whoever has thoroughly inspected the *oeconomia* of the Old Testament, discovers that it is to a large extent figurative. Of course, in many places God pronounces the laws and ceremonies of the Jews his own, calls them holy, and sets them in place against the rites of the pagans [...]. It is then necessary to proclaim these ceremonies divine, holy, and wise, because the mysteries of the divine and holy religion are obscured by these outer symbols, which in fact had been observed only by the Jews.⁹³

Reimarus’s statement is in full accordance with orthodox doctrine of a double sense of Scripture, where the truth of Christian dogma is “concealed by symbolic ceremonies, figures, actions, and matters.”⁹⁴ This alone justifies the study of the *antiquitates Hebraicae* as prerequisite for the execution of a genuine Christian interpretation of the Old Testament.

Whereas Reimarus was still a firm adherent to orthodoxy at the time of his Reland lecture, his position shifted and changed sometime during the 1730s, when he started to draft his radical critique of revelation, the *Apologie*.⁹⁵

⁹² Voltaire is probably the most symbolic figure for the Enlightenment’s onslaught on ancient Judaism. See Manuel, *The Broken Staff*, 193–201; also Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, 231–46.

⁹³ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum* (1731), ed. and intr. Peter Stemmer (Göttingen, 1983), 28–29: “Jam qui oeconomiam Veteris Testamenti probe consideraverit, deprehendet, eam maxima ex parte symbolicam fuisse [...]. Scilicet innumeris in locis Deus statuta et ceremonias Judaeorum sua statuta appellat, sancta cognominat ritibusque gentilium opponit [...]. Ergo necesse est, has ceremonias divinas, sanctas, sapientes dici propter divinae sanctaeque religionis mysteria hac symbolorum externorum veste involuta, quae quidem solis Judaeis cognita erant.”

⁹⁴ Ibid., 6: “Non sunt tamen unius generis haec vaticinia, quoniam alia diserta sunt et literalia, alia vero sub symbolicis ceremoniis, personis, factis, rebus dictisque latent [...]. Eiusmodi signa et figurae latent primo in ceremoniis quibusdam.”

⁹⁵ Trying to pinpoint an exact dating of Reimarus’s shift from orthodoxy to heterodoxy seems fruitless. Based upon Reimarus’s own account (StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 14b)—

Reimarus was clearly able to conceal this break from orthodoxy from most of the world, excluding the five (still) mysterious confidants,⁹⁶ while he continued teaching at the *Gymnasium illustre*. His course on the Jewish *antiquitates* remained a constant on his lecture record, which he taught at least twenty more times until his death in 1768.⁹⁷ Since we now know that Reimarus privately rejected the principles of the *analogia fidei* and the *sensus mysticus* as inappropriate and falsifying avenues to reading and interpreting Scripture, it is quite intriguing for us to explore what might have been going on in his classroom during the 1740s and 1750s, when Reimarus was teaching on this very subject. Was Reimarus still able to teach the figurative significance of the *oeconomia veterum Hebraeorum* with a straight face, or was he trying to avoid the topic altogether?

It is possible to answer this question because there is a lecture manuscript that dates back to that period.⁹⁸ Evidence suggests that the manuscript is based upon a lecture from some time after 1741,⁹⁹ when Reimarus must already have been working feverishly on his radical work. By that time, the hegemony of Reland's textbook had been broken by Conrad Iken (1689–1753),¹⁰⁰ professor at the *Gymnasium illustre* in Bremen and a good friend of Reimarus's mentor Johann Christoph Wolf.¹⁰¹ While teaching a course on Jewish antiquities at

in which, in a later draft of his *Apologie*, Reimarus points out that he worked on this project for about thirty years—we can assume that it occurred some time during the mid-1730s. See Gerhard Alexander, "Einleitung," in Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (Frankfurt, 1972), vol. 1, 23; also Peter Stemmer, *Weissagung und Kritik: eine Studie zur Hermeneutik bei Hermann Samuel Reimarus* (Göttingen, 1983), 90–91; somewhat disagreeing with Stemmer is Günter Mühlfordt in his review of the *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti* (note 92 above), in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 113 (March 1988), 203; see also Hans Hübner, "Die 'orthodoxe' hermeneutica sacra des Hermann Samuel Reimarus," in *Die Hermeneutik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, ed. Manfred Beetz and Giuseppe Cacciatore (Cologne, 2000), 99–111.

⁹⁶ In an earlier version of the prologue, Reimarus writes: "In aller Zeit mögen sie etwa fünf vertraute Freunde von mir gelesen haben, jedoch ohne die geringste Abschrift davon zu nehmen. Ich finde auch bis auf diese Stunde noch groß Bedenken sie gemein zu machen [...]" see Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 639.

⁹⁷ Reimarus, *Handschriftenverzeichnis*, 28–34.

⁹⁸ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conradi Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, UB Rostock, Ms. orient., 71.

⁹⁹ The lecture makes a reference to one of Reimarus's smaller dissertations entitled *De legibus Mosaicis ante Mosen*, which was published in 1741.

¹⁰⁰ Iken, "Konrad Iken," in *ADB* 14 (1881), 15.

¹⁰¹ Letter Iken to Wolf, 12 December 1727, SUB HH Sup. ep. 117, 340: "[...] ut tibi propius innotescere, et ad tuam admitti amicitiam, omnibus votis expetiverim."

Bremen, Iken had become increasingly aware of the shortcomings of Reland's work.¹⁰² Although Reland's book leaves "in those things, which it treats, all other publications of that genre that exist to this point, far behind," Iken concedes, Reland's somewhat lopsided focus on the *antiquitates sacrae* ignored basically all those matters "that pertain to the state as well as to the domestic life of the Jews."¹⁰³ Iken's own version of a textbook, his *Antiquitates Hebraicae*, claimed to mend these shortcomings by proposing a tripartite structure: (1) *De statu ecclesiastico*; (2) *De statu politico*; (3) *De statu oeconomico*. Although Iken's new textbook did not fundamentally shake up the world of learning and many institutions of higher education remained faithful to one of the many editions of Reland's opus,¹⁰⁴ his arguments must have sounded convincing enough to Reimarus, because shortly after its publication in 1734, Reimarus started using Iken's *Antiquitates Hebraicae* and never switched back to Reland again.¹⁰⁵

The manuscript of Reimarus's Iken lecture is 333 pages long. As was true for the Reland lecture, however, Reimarus did not cover the entire *Antiquitates Hebraicae*. Rather, it seems that he focused on a different segment each semester. The lecture catalogue suggests that during the academic year 1742–43, Reimarus was lecturing publicly about the *pars sacra*, the equivalent of roughly half of the *Antiquitates Hebraicae*. Privately, he was lecturing on the *pars civilis* and *domestica*.¹⁰⁶ This seems somewhat perplexing. From what we

¹⁰² Conrad Iken, *Antiquitates Hebraicae secundum triplicem Iudaeorum statum ecclesiasticum politicum et oeconomicum breviter delineatae* (Bremen⁴, 1764), 3–4*: "[...] ut cum sublimiori hoc studio *Historiam Ecclesiasticam* et *Antiquitates Sacras* docendas susciperemus. Quorum desiderio pro virili respondere, uti officii nostri esse consebamus, ita ad Relandi *Antiquitates Sacras* explicare Auditoribus coepi."

¹⁰³ Ibid., 4*: "Licet enim illud in iis quae tractat, extant, scripta, longissimo post se intervallo relinquat [...], omissis plane [...] illis, quae ad *Politiam*, ut et *Rem Domesticam* Judaeorum spectant [...]."

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Johannis Simonis, *Vorlesungen über die Jüdischen Alterthümer nach Anleitung Hadr. Relands* [...], ed. Samuel Mursinna (Halle, 1769).

¹⁰⁵ *Catalogus praelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXXXIV. usque ad veris initium MDCCXXXV. publice et privatim fuerunt habita [...]* (Hamburg, 1735): "Diebus vero Jovis & Veneris illustrabo *Antiquitates Hebraicas*, secundum *Statum Politicum & Oeconomicum*, quas nuper laudatissimo exemplo cum Ecclesiasticis conjunctas in compendio vulgavit Doctiss. Conradus Ikenius. Nam cum Ecclesiasticae Seu Sacrae antiquitates dudum extant a variis scriptae, & a me quoque, Cl. Relando duce, olim publice privatimque expositae sint, domesticae tamen & civiles, quo & militares spectant, diu desideratae, nec minoris tamen ad intelligendos utriusque foederis Libros sunt utilitatis."

¹⁰⁶ "Hoc anno qui iam instat, Cl. Conradi Ikenii *Antiquitates Hebraicas* denuo interpretari animus est, sic ut publicas horas rebus Hebreorum sacris exponendis impendat,

know, the academic year encompassed fewer than 282 days in which classes could be scheduled.¹⁰⁷ We know that Reimarus's course generally met twice each week for presumably no more than one full hour.¹⁰⁸ Reimarus thus had approximately ninety-two sessions to cover the more than 300 pages of the *pars sacra*. Mathematically understood, this would mean that in each lesson he would treat the equivalent of three-and-a-half pages from Iken. Although we can add another page and a half of Reimarus's own comments, this still leaves us with a surprisingly small amount of material presented in one lesson. How can we account for that? This could mean that after teaching this course for several decades, Reimarus relied on his own knowledge and memory that was not tracked in his notes. But this must not be the only possible explanation. No matter how well Reimarus knew the material, his students were still neophytes. Although they had been well prepared at the *Johanneum* and knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, not all, if any, owned a copy of the Iken textbook. Most likely, Reimarus dictated a segment from Iken and added then his own

civiles autem & domesticas privatim enarrat"; see *Catalogus paelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXLII. usque ad veris initium MDCCXLII. publice et privatim fuerunt habita* (Hamburg, 1742).

¹⁰⁷ The school regulations from 1732 read as follows: "Weilen durch viele und unnöthige Vacanzen die Knaben merklich versäumet werden; so hat E.E. Rath nachfolgende Ferien erlaubet, nemlich in iedem Haupt-Feste der heil. Ostern, Pfingsten, Michaelis und Weihnachten, nach geendigtem Feste einen Tag, zween Tage aber nach geendigtem Oster-auch Michaelis-Examen, in der Fastnachts-Woche drey Tage, und acht in den Hunds-Tagen, welche nach Beschaffenheit des Wetters der Rector anzuseigen hat"; see *Sammlung*, vol. 6, 161. [Accordingly, we would arrive at the following days where no classes are scheduled: six on Easter, three on Pentecost, two on Michaelis, four on Christmas, three after the Easter exam, three after the Michaelis exam, three during carnival week, and eight during the summer. This amounts to a total of twenty-six days or roughly a month (we may easily assume another five days where no classes were held, because during the actual exam days no material was covered and there were numerous other holidays during the year). Together with the fifty-two Sundays, it would come to a total of eighty-three days annually on which no lectures were held.]

¹⁰⁸ The *Catalogus paelectionum* does not always provide the days when specific courses were taught. But when it does, it appears that courses were always scheduled on two days per week. Teachers generally taught at the same time slot throughout their entire career. During the academic year 1728–29, for example, Reimarus taught Reland's *Antiquitates* on Tuesdays and Fridays from the second to the third period. See *Catalogus paelectionum [...] initio A.C. MDCCXXVIII. usque ad veris initium MDCCXXIX publice et privatim fuerunt habita [...]* (Hamburg, 1729), 7*: "Anno insecuturo, constituit [...] Eruditissimi Hadr. Relandi librum III. Antiquitatum Hebraicarum, qui argumentum omnino dignum de Sacrificiis complectitur, diebus Martis ac Veneris, explicare."

comments. This was probably done at an exceedingly slow pace so that students could write down quotations even in Greek and Hebrew. Despite their previous training, it was certainly not easy for them to follow the numerous bibliographical references of authors they may never have heard about and topics they had never explored before.

But all these challenges notwithstanding, this was the *Gymnasium illustre* of Hamburg after all, where the spirit of the great humanist Fabricius was still living on in many ways, not some provincial Latin school. On the first day of class, instead of first gently introducing students to the world of Jewish antiquities and possibly their significance for exegesis, they are thrown immediately into the cold water. Without much preparation, Reimarus introduces one of the most complex scholarly debates in the field during the first lesson:

The hypothesis of Spencer¹⁰⁹ about the origin of the Hebrew rituals was not only favored by Marsham in his *Chronicus canon aegyptiacus* (London, 1698),¹¹⁰ but also by John Toland in his *Origines Judaicae* (The Hague, 1709)¹¹¹ and, even before that, by Maimonides in his *Moreh Nebukhim*, part III, chapters 32 and 45,¹¹² which Abarbanel, who adduces passages from both Talmud and Rabbith that agree with this opinion, vindicates

¹⁰⁹ See, in general, Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 55–79 and “Das Geheimnis der Wahrheit: das Konzept der ‘doppelten Religion’ und die Erfindung der Religionsgeschichte,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 3 (2000), 108–34; Martin Mulso, “Orientalistik im Kontext der sozinianistischen und deistischen Debatten um 1700: Spencer, Crell, Locke und Newton,” *Scientia poetica* 2 (1998), 27–57; also Guy Stroumsa, “John Spencer and the Roots of Idolatry,” *History of Religions* 41, no. 1 (2001), 1–23 and his *A New Science*, 96–100; on the concept of the “religio duplex,” see Jan Assmann, *Religio Duplex: Ägyptische Mysterien und Europäische Aufklärung* (Berlin, 2010).

¹¹⁰ It is not clear which edition Reimarus is referring to here. Marsham’s work had appeared in 1672, almost thirteen years before Spencer’s *De legibus*, but two years after Spencer’s influential treatise *De Urim et Thummim* (1670); see John Marsham, *Chronicus Canon Aegyptiacus Ebraicus Graecus* (London, 1672). There was an edition published in 1698, but it appeared in Amsterdam, not in London.

¹¹¹ John Toland, *Adeisidaemon, sive Titus Livius a superstitione vindicatus … annexae sunt ejusdem origines judaicae* (The Hague, 1709).

¹¹² Moses Maimonides, *Liber מורה נבוכים doctor perplexorum: ad dubi & obscuria Scripturae loca rectius intelligenda veluti clavem continens … in Linguam Latinam perspicue & fideliter conversus a Johanne Buxtorfio, Fil* (Basel, 1629); for a modern edition, see Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, ed. and trans. by Shlomo Pines and intr. by Leo Strauss, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1963); for a detailed analysis of the “Guide,” see Davidson, *Moses Maimonides*, 323–428.

in chapter IV of his *Exordium in Leviticum*¹¹³ against Nahmanides. It had also been put forward by the fathers of the Christian Church, on whom you may consult pp. 666ff. of part 1 of Buddeus's *Historia Ecclesiastica Veteris Testamenti*¹¹⁴ as well as § 1 and 2 of chapter 22 of Outram's *De sacrificiis libri duo*.¹¹⁵ On Spencer's hypothesis and its opponents see chapter 15 § 3 of the late J.A. Fabricius's *Bibliographia antiquaria* and page 354 f. of volume 1 of Johann Fabricius's *Historia Bibliothecae Fabricianae*¹¹⁶ and especially Christoph Matthias Pfaff's preface to his more recent edition of Spencer's¹¹⁷ *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibusque*.¹¹⁸

If Reimarus contests the originality of John Spencer's (1630–1693) thesis here, it must have sounded like a foreign language in the ears of his students, who probably had little use or context for this information. Imagine how a young student, arriving perhaps from a small hamlet on the outskirts of Hamburg, would have fared on this intense first day of class, as he attempted to follow the instructor through an abyss of historiographical debate. The passage on Spencer reads, in fact, very much like a page from Fabricius's *Biographia antiquaria*, where a particular aspect or controversy is presented by an almost

¹¹³ See note 76.

¹¹⁴ Johann Franz Buddeus, *Historia Ecclesiastica Veteris Testamenti*, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Halle, 1726), 532–33.

¹¹⁵ See note 74.

¹¹⁶ Johann Fabricius, *Historia bibliothecae Fabricianae*, 6 vols. (Wolfenbüttel, 1717–24); Johann Fabricius (1644–1729), not to be confused with Reimarus's father-in-law Johann Albert Fabricius (1668–1736), was professor of theology at the University of Helmstedt; see Hermann Schüssler, "Johann Fabricius" in *NDB* 4 (1959), 735–36.

¹¹⁷ John Spencer, *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus earumque rationibus ... Praemittitur Christophe. Matthaei Pfaffii. dissertatio praeliminaris qua de vita Spenceri* (Tübingen, 1727).

¹¹⁸ Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conradi Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, 3: "Spenceri hypothesis de origine rituum Hebraeorum placuit non solum Joh: Marshamo in canone chro-nico. Londini 1698. in 4t. sed et Joh. Tolando in origg. Judaicis. Hagae Comit. 1709. 8. et dudum Maimonidi in More Nebuchim, parte III. c. 32 et 45. quem vindicans [con]tra Nachmanidem Abarbanel Capp. iv. Exord. Levit. etiam Talmudis et Rabboth loca, huic Sententiae faventia, adducit. Placuit et patribus eccles[iae] christianaes, quos vide apud Buddeum in Hist[oria] eccl[esiastica] V[eteris] T[estamenti] part. 1. pag. 666. seqq. et Outram. de Sacrificiis capp. 22. §. 1. et 2. De Jo. Spencero ejusque hypothesi et aversariis [?] B.J.A. Fabricium in Bibliograph[ia] antiquaria: capp. 15 §.3. et Jo. Fabricium in his[oria] biblioth[eca] sua part. 1. pp. 354 sq. praecipue vero Christ. Matth. Pfaffium in fronte recentionis edit[ionis] Libr[i]: Spenceri de legibus Hebrae[orum] ritualibus."

indigestible amount of bibliographical information.¹¹⁹ At that point, however, many of the students in Reimarus's class had probably never heard of either Spencer or John Marsham (1602–1685), and possibly not even of Toland, who were all very well known in scholarly circles, but not necessarily household names in Hamburg and its vicinity. It is rather unlikely that they would have known Spencer's theory of the pagan, or more precisely, Egyptian, origins of the Mosaic law and that accordingly God, who was dealing with a degenerate and crude Hebrew people, prone to the idolatrous practices of the pagan world, out of necessity had "adopted no small number of customs among his sacred ones, which had been honored among pagans for quite some time, but which were either tolerable absurdities or suitable to conceal some mystery."¹²⁰

In case Spencer's bold theory was too much for the minds of conservative Lutheran boys,¹²¹ Reimarus was precisely the teacher who could potentially comfort them by examining these theological issues in class. Probably not much more than a year earlier, he had written a small treatise entitled *De legibus Mosaicis ante Mosen*, in which he had attempted to refute Spencer's hypothesis.¹²² Although we do not know how elaborately he may have discussed his own scholarship in his class, Reimarus's lecture notes suggest that he provided at least some objections to Spencer's theory. He points out to his students that many parts of the ritual law, such as sacrifices or circumcision, already existed at the time of the patriarchs and, apart from the severe

¹¹⁹ Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 735: "idem praeter typicum respectum ad Christum [...] alias plerumque rationes ad Ethnica sacra Aegyptiorum vitanda vel imitanda pertinentes urgent, impugnati, ne interpretes Levitici et aliorum Mosis librorum scriptoresque de sacrificiis et typis sacris, supra laudatos iam memoremus, ab Hermanno Witsio in *Aegyptiacis Amstel.* 1683. 1696. 4. Claudio Fressenio lib. 1. disquisitt. Biblicarum capp. 4. sq. Natali Alexandro in aetate 4. Testamenti Veteris, Ioanne van der Weyen in variis sacris, Ludovico Ferrando in parte 1. observationum de religione Christiana Gallice editarum, a Iac. Triglandio in diss. de origine et caussis rituum Mosaicorum, Lugd. Bat. 1702. 4. et a Ioanne Friderico Weidlero dissert. de corruptis legarum Hebraearum rationibus apud ipsos Hebraeos (Maimonidem praecipue) deprehensis Witteb. 1713 [...]."

¹²⁰ John Spencer, *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus, et earum rationibus, libri tres*, 2nd ed. (The Hague, 1686), vol. 3, 4: "Deus interim [...] ritus non paucos, multorum annorum & Gentium usu cohonestatos, quos ineptias norat esse tolerabiles, aut ad mysterium aliquod adumbrandum aptos, in sacrorum suorum numerum adoptavit"; see Daniel Stolzenberg, "John Spencer and the Perils of Sacred Philology," *Past and Present* 214 (2012), 129–63.

¹²¹ Although Spencer has been considered "orthodox," his argument about the human origin of the Mosaic law was certainly daring and potentially dangerous and had considerable influence in radical circles. See Martin Mulsow, "Orientalistik im Kontext der sozinianischen und deistischen Debatten um 1700," 30–31.

¹²² Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *De legibus Mosaicis ante Mosen cogitationes* (Hamburg, 1741).

punishments that God promised to those who did not observe his law and fell into pagan worship, there was ultimately an overarching typical sense, which had remained hidden for both pagans and Jews, without which these rites would not have any divine grace.¹²³ Regardless of these reverberations of Christology, whoever might expect a similar tone to what had prevailed in Reimarus's Reland lecture would be mistaken.

There was a distinctive shift away from strictly theological concerns. This shift in emphasis becomes most apparent with topics that almost beg for a multilayered analysis that is, on the one hand, historical and cultural, touching upon the main scholarly questions in the field, and that, on the other hand, solves theological concerns and, most of all, acknowledges the prevalence of the *sensus mysticus seu typicus*. Reimarus's treatment of the molten sea, one of the marvelous structures of the Solomonic temple and a biblical artifact invested with tremendous symbolic religious significance, demonstrates this problem most clearly.¹²⁴

With the claim of God as its architect, there was no further justification necessary to engage in attempts to reconstruct the temple's floor plans and dimensions.¹²⁵ What could be more beautiful, aesthetically pleasing, and mathematically intricate than a divine design? From a Christian point of view, these efforts had received additional fuel through Origen's interpretation of the

¹²³ Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conradi Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, 3–4: “antiquitas et institutio divina praecipuor[um] rituum, Sabbathi, Sacrificiorum, circumcisionis, aliorumq[ue] plurimorum, q[uam] viguisse adeo apud Patriarchas ante Mosen demonstrare conatus sum in Diss[ertatione] de ritibus Mosaicis ante Mosen. II.) Testimonium generale Dei, sua haec mandata vocantis, et cultum gentilium, maxime Egyptiorum execrantis Deut. 12,30 seq. Lev. 18,2 seq. collato ad Eph. c.2. 14 seq. statuta gravi poena in delinquentes et additis p[er]missionibus, si ex praescrito Dei vixissent; quod non est legislationis tolerantis tantum ritus adoptatos. III) praecipuus Scopus rituum typicus ad quem ex instituto comparati sunt et sine quo nihil haberent Deo dignum, ipsis gentilibus et Judaeis agnoscentibus.”

¹²⁴ On the temple and its parts from an archeological point of view, see Theo A. Busink, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem von Salomo bis Herodes*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1970).

¹²⁵ See Helen Rosenau, *Vision of the Temple: The Image of the Temple of Jerusalem in Judaism and Christianity* (London, 1979); analogous to these attempts are the efforts of “mapping paradise” and the *geographia sacra*. On these subjects, see Robert G. North, *A History of Biblical Map Making* (Wiesbaden, 1979) and Kenneth Nebenzahl, *Maps of the Holy Land: Images of Terra Sancta through Two Millenia* (New York, 1986). More specifically, see Alessandro Scaffi, *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth* (Chicago, 2006) and Zur Shalev, *Sacred Words and Worlds: Geography, Religion, and Scholarship, 1550–1700* (Leiden, 2012).

temple as a prefiguration of the Christian church.¹²⁶ Catholic and Protestant scholars alike continued with varying degrees of success to invent, imagine, redraw, and reconstruct its courts, buildings, and vessels.¹²⁷ Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a commentary, monograph, or treatise on the subject could hardly do without etchings and drawings of the temple compound.¹²⁸ One of the most famous efforts was probably the elaborate descriptions and drawings by the Spanish Jesuit Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608),¹²⁹ whose massive three-volume edition of his commentary on Ezekiel¹³⁰ contains numerous etchings, depicting the layout of the whole temple complex, its courts, buildings, vessels, and columns. Villalpando's reconstruction efforts received much acclaim beyond the geographical and confessional domains.¹³¹ In fact, during the 1680s, Gerhard Schott (1641–1702),¹³² a merchant and councilman of Hamburg, commissioned a replica of the Solomonic temple that was based upon Villalpando's description.¹³³ The model became a major tourist attraction to which even such prominent figures as Peter the Great paid their respects,¹³⁴ and the traveler and bibliophile Conrad Zacharias von Uffenbach (1683–1734) included this site in his already packed sightseeing

¹²⁶ Paul von Naredi-Rainer, *Salomons Tempel und das Abendland: Monumentale Folgen Historischer Irrtümer* (Cologne, 1994), 48–49.

¹²⁷ For an overview of this substantial body of work, see Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 389–98.

¹²⁸ For some select examples, see Jim Bennett and Scott Mandelbrote, *The Garden, the Ark, the Tower, the Temple: Biblical Metaphors of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1998), 135–55; also von Naredi-Rainer, *Salomons Tempel und das Abendland*.

¹²⁹ Juan Antonio Ramirez et al., eds., *Dios, arquitecto: J.B. Villalpando y el Templo de Salomón* (Madrid, 1991); Jaime Lara, "God's Good Taste: The Jesuit Aesthetics of Juan Bautista Villalpando in the Sixth and Tenth Centuries B.C.E.," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John O'Malley et al. (Toronto, 1999), 505–21; Sergey R. Kravtsov, "Juan Bautista Villalpando and Sacred Architecture in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64 (2005), 312–39.

¹³⁰ Juan Bautista Villalpando, *In Ezechielem explanationes et apparatus urbis ac templi Hierosolymitani: commentariis et imaginibus illustratus opus tribus tomis distinctum* (Rome, 1596–1604).

¹³¹ See A.K. Offenberg, "Jacob Jehuda Leon (1602–1675) and His Model of the Temple," in *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Jan van den Berg et al. (Boston, Mass., 1988), 100.

¹³² "Gerhard Schott(e)," in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller*, vol. 7 (1879), no. 3548.

¹³³ Hans Reuther, "Das Modell des Salomonischen Tempels im Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte," *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 19 (1980), 168–81.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 172.

schedule.¹³⁵ This model remained part of a permanent exhibit at the city's opera house until 1710, when it was moved to London.¹³⁶ So as a student at the *Johanneum*, curiosity may very well have driven young Reimarus to drop by the opera house and take a close look at this much-admired marvel (Fig. 3).

Whereas not many had the determination and endurance of Villalpando to meticulously reconstruct the entire temple complex, countless others embarked on more modest projects, yielding numerous smaller dissertations that focused on details such as the bronze pillars,¹³⁷ the exterior altar,¹³⁸ the interior altar,¹³⁹ the table of the shewbread,¹⁴⁰ and the molten sea.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, by the time Reimarus was teaching the course, the model of the Solomonic temple had already left Hamburg. Whereas Reimarus's own teachers could refer their students to take a look at this marvelous creation at the opera house, Reimarus needed to find other methods to provide a visually

¹³⁵ Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen Holland und Engelland*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1753), 115–17: “Das Modell vom Tempel zu Jerusalem, welches hinter dem Theater stehet, ist gewiß ein solches Kunststück, das verdienet gesehen zu werden. Es hat ihn Herr Schott zu einer Opera von der Zerstörung Jerusalems mit ungemeinen Kosten machen lassen, wie dann sechs Jahre daran gearbeitet worden. Es hat vier und zwanzig Fuß im Quadrat [...]. Es ist alles nach der Schrifft und der herrlichen Beschreibung von dem Tempel, die der berühmte Villalpandus geschrieben, gemacht und verguldet. Der Rauch-und Brand-Altar, wie auch das Meer sind alle von Metall gegossen, die übrigen Gefäße und Geräthe sind alle vorhanden [...]. Die Priester sind auch nach ihrer Kleidungen und verschiedenen Geschäftten artig von Holz geschnitzt, und zum Theil angestrichen [...]]; [es] soll zusammen sechs und dreissig tausend Mark, oder zwölf tausend Reichsthaler gekostet haben. Ich habe aber von andern Leuten gehört, daß es nur sechzehn tausend Mark gewesen, welches dannoch genug ist [...].”

¹³⁶ Reuther, “Das Modell des Salomonischen Tempels,” 172.

¹³⁷ Augustin Vagetius, *De columnis aeneis templi Salomonis* (Wittenberg, 1695); Meinhard Plesken, *Dissertatio philologica de columnis aeneis* (Wittenberg, 1719).

¹³⁸ Theodor Dassovius, *Altare exterius Hierosolymitani templi, ad mentem Hebræorum veterum delineatum* (Wittenberg, 1698).

¹³⁹ Johannes ab Hamm, *Exercitationes philologicae sacrae de ara interiore ejusque mysterio* (Herborn, 1715).

¹⁴⁰ Christian Ludwig Schlichter, *De mensa facierum ejusque mysterio, liber singularis* (Halle, 1738).

¹⁴¹ Conrad Melius, *Antiquarius sacer... cum mantissa dissertationum. 1. De mari aeneo templi Salomonis. 2. Omina bruta. 3. Machina, pro invenienda longitudine locorum. 4. De arca Noe* (Königsberg, 1702); Leonhard Christoph Sturm, *Dissertatio de mare aeneo in Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum*, vol. 19 (Venice, 1756), 1537–1604.

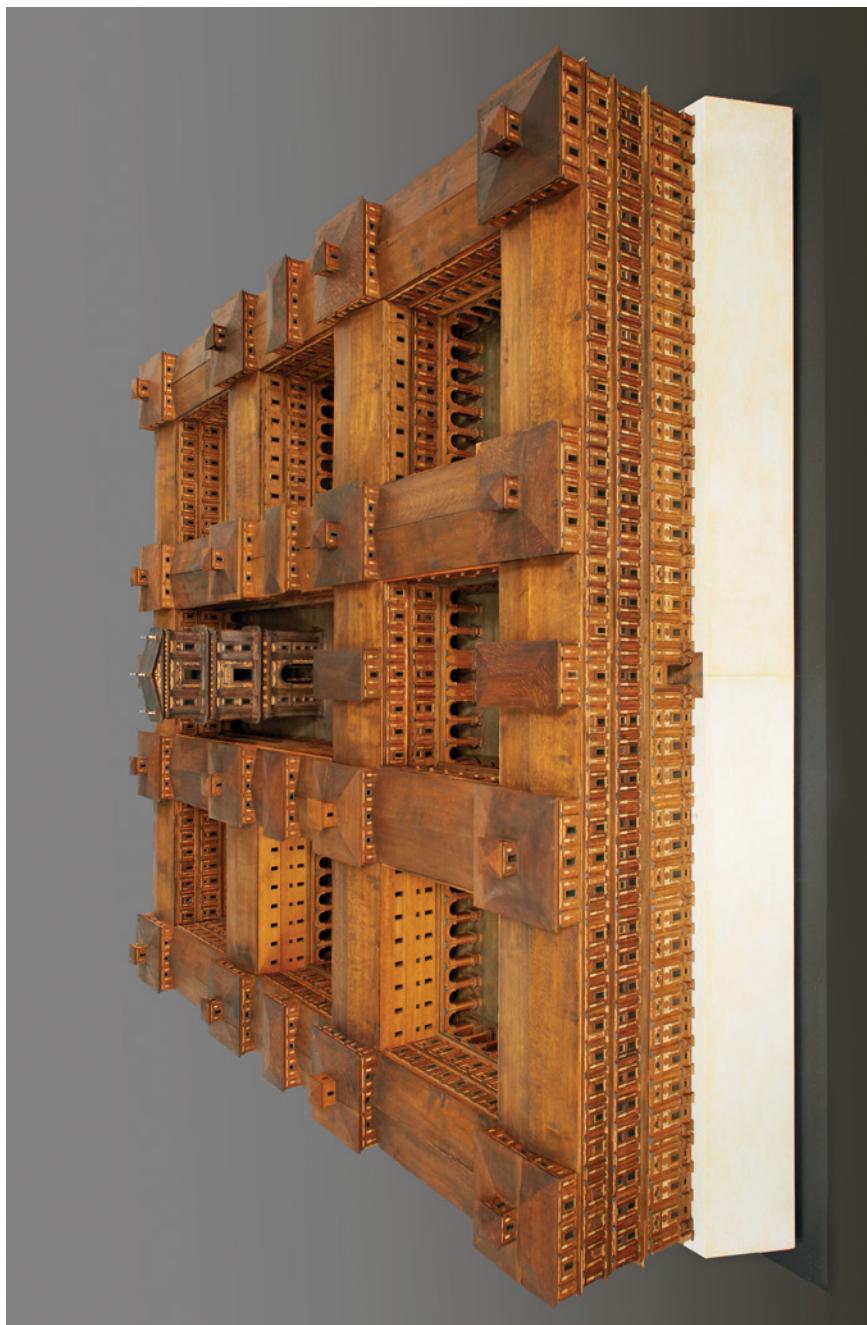


FIGURE 3 *Unfinished wooden model of the Solomonic temple (ca. 1680) at the Hamburg Museum, commissioned by Hamburg merchant Gerhard Schott (1641–1702).*

PHOTO BY ROOS ALDERSHOFF. COURTESY OF THE HAMBURG MUSEUM.

engaging and vibrant lesson. A lesson on the molten sea could probably have started with Reimarus reciting the corresponding passage from Iken:

[Between the portico of the temple and the altar], not exactly in the middle, but rather somewhat more to the south of the altar, Solomon constructed the *הַיָם מָוֶץ* *mare aeneum* [molten sea]; it was cast out of solid bronze, one hands-breadth thick, five cubits high, somewhat round, but in the upper part with six curved incisions, depicting the form of a hexagonal lily; its circumference was allotted to thirty cubits, but its diameter to ten cubits; hence the difficulty is neatly solved, when in one place it is said to have held two thousand baths [of water] and in another three thousand. This sea was furnished all around with a double row of bovine heads; it stood on twelve brazen oxen that were positioned in such a way that always three of them were turned to the [four] separate regions of the world: see 1 Kings 7:23ff. & 2 Chr. 4:2ff. Lastly, a heavy marble stone of several cubits was in place, which supported the sea. The use of this vessel was for the priests to clean their hands and feet; for this purpose there were those who made sure that the water flowed again into the sea through the hollow bull-shaped gourds surrounding it, after it had been brought there through the hollow bovine feet from the spring of Etham.¹⁴²

Iken's account provides a solid but somewhat generic textbook description that obscures the highly complex and theologically significant scholarship of this marvelous detail of the Solomonic temple, which examinations of the biblical accounts in the books of Kings and Chronicles yielded:

¹⁴² Iken, *Antiquitates Hebraicae*, 86–87: “In hoc spatio, non tamen exacte in medio, sed non-nihil adhuc ipso altari australius, constituit Salomo *הַיָם מָוֶץ* *mare aeneum*, fusum ex aere solido, ad palmi integri crassitatem, altum v. cubitos, rotundum quidem, sed in superiore parte sex incisuris repandis, lilii hexagonalis formam repraesentans, unde & peripheria illi tribuitur xxx, diameter autem x cubitorum, atque hinc commode solvitur difficultas, quando in uno loco MM in altero MMM bathos cepisse dicitur. Exornatum hoc mare circumcirca erat gemina serie tuberculorum & formarum bovinarum; portabatur autem a XIIII bobus itidem aeneis, ita dispositis, ut tres eorum, singulis mundi plagiis obversi essent. v. 1 Reg. VII.23. seqq. & 2 Chron. IV. 2. seqq. Denique lapis marmoreus cubitus crassus a nonnullis ponitur, cui mare hoc inniteretur. Usus hujus vasis erat, ut Sacerdotes ex illo manus & pedes lavarent, quem in finem, sunt qui aquam ex fonte Etham per cavos boum pedes eo delatam, per capita boum mare cingentium iterum effluxisse contendunt.”

1 Kings 7:23–39:

Then he made the tank of cast metal,
10 cubits across from brim to brim,
completely round [עַד-שְׁפֹתָן מִשְׁפֹתָן]; it was 5 cubits
high, and it measured 30 cubits in
circumference [קֹוָה שֶׁלְשִׁים בְּאַמָּה]. There were gourds
[וּפְקֻעִים] below the brim completely
encircling it—ten to a cubit,
encircling the tank; the gourds were
in two rows [שְׁנֵי טוֹרִים], cast in one
piece with it. It stood upon twelve
oxen: three facing north, three facing
west, three facing south, and three
facing east, with the tank resting
upon them; their haunches were all
turned inward. It was a handbreadth
thick, and its brim was made like that
of a cup, like the petals of a lily. Its
capacity was 2000 baths [אֲלָפִים בָּתָה] [...]. and the tank he placed on
the right side of the House, at the
southeast [corner].

It was believed that the vessel was probably King Solomon's version of the brazen laver that was located between the holy place and the altar of the burnt offering.¹⁴³ Although both vessels seemed to have been placed in the proximity of the altar, for some scholars such as Villalpando, the molten sea's

2 Chr. 4:2–4.10:

He made the sea of cast metal 10
cubits across from brim to brim,
perfectly round; it was 5 cubits high,
and its circumference was 30 cubits
[וְקָנוּ שְׁלָשִׁים בְּאַמָּה יָסֶב אֹתָו סְבִיב].
Beneath were *figures of oxen* [זְמָוֹת בְּקָרִים] set all around it, of 10 cubits,
encircling the sea; the oxen were
in two rows, cast in one piece with
it. It stood upon twelve oxen: three
faced north, three faced west, three
faced south, and three faced east,
with the sea resting upon them; their
haunches were all turned inward.
It was a handbreadth thick, and its
brim was made like that of a cup, like
the petals of a lily. *It held 3000 baths*
[מְחִזֵּיק בְּתִים שֶׁלְשִׁת אֱלָפִים יְבִיל] [...];
but the sea served the priests for
washing [...]. He set the sea on the
right side, at the southeast corner.

143 Lundius, *Die Alten Jüdischen Heiligtümer*, 170: “Es stand aber dieses Hand-Faß zwischen der Stifts-Hütten oder dem Heiligen und Altar [...] nicht gerade zwischen dem Heiligen und dem Brand-Opfer-Altare/ sondern etwas zur Seite nach der rechten oder gegen Süden zu/ wie also das eherne Meer im ersten/ und das Hand-Faß im andern Tempel auch zur Seite stunden [...]. Salomon machte im Tempel an stat dieses ehernen Hand-Fasses/ welches mit andern Gefäßen der Stifts-Hütten oben auf dem Boden des Tempels gesetzt ward, ein ander sehr groß Gefäß/ gleichfalls von Ertz/ welches wegen seiner Grösse ein Meer (das eherne Meer) genannt ward”; see also Gottfried Thymus, *גָּאֵל תְּקוּף בָּיוֹר נָחָת ex parte labrum aeneum, Den ehern Tauff-Stein ex Exod. xxx, 18–21 aliisque Sc. Sacrae locis exercitatione theologico-philologica* (Zwickau, 1675), 19–20: “[...] dictum MARE, quod ex parte respondit labro tabernaculi, utpote quod in aedificatione imitatus est Salomo [...]”

precise location was extremely meaningful. The Jesuit scholar illustrated that, whereas the laver was placed between holy place and altar, the molten sea was located on the right-hand side of the temple, slightly to the southeast. Since Villalpando had viewed the entire temple compound as a prefiguration of Christ,¹⁴⁴ the combination of the huge basin of water and the blood from the slaughtered animals of the altar left little doubt for him that “the incredible amount of water, which was allotted for the purification of the priests, referred to the blood and water that flowed from Christ’s [pierced] right side, which had the power to purify all of humankind and to make it whiter than snow.”¹⁴⁵ But it does not take the staggering compilation exercises of a Jesuit scholar to develop such conjectures. The aforementioned Conrad Melius’s Christological musings definitely elevated the discussion. To Melius, the vessel was the “symbol of the inscrutability of the mysteries of faith.”¹⁴⁶ Its massive body of water symbolized the teachings of the gospels as the eternal spring of salvation and life.¹⁴⁷ For Melius, the twelve oxen that carried the weight of the gospel on their backs represented the apostles. How could it be any different? With three of them always turning their heads to the four quadrants of the earth, they indicate that the disciples were preaching the message of the gospel not only to the people of Judea and Samaria but to the entire world (Fig. 4).¹⁴⁸

At times, however, Melius has to stretch the biblical account, using his philosophical imagination to make it align with his Christology. The Hebrew Bible, for example, was silent about how the water traveled out of the vessel. For Melius, the key to the solution of the problem lay in the adorning gourds [פְּקָשִׁים] in

¹⁴⁴ Villalpando, *In Ezechielem explanationes*, vol. 2, 474: “Universo hoc aedificio Christi corpus repraesentari, decrevit, & voluit Deus.”

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 475: “[...] ut maris ingens aquae copia ad purificandos Sacerdotes deputata, sanguinem, & aquam e Christi dextro latere manantem referat, quo universam [sic] humatum genus ablui, & super nivem dealbari valuisse [...]”

¹⁴⁶ Melius, *De mari aeneo*, 38: “Mare Symbolum est in perscrutabilitatis mysteriorum fidei.”

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 38: “Est fons e Scaturigine Israelis in congregationibus: Ps. 68,27. Fons consolationis in valle miseriarum, Ps. 84,7. Fons salutis, ex quo cum gaudio hauriunt fideles. Jes. 12,3. Fons perpetuus & scaturigo aquarum perennis: Jer. 2,13. Purus fluvius aquae vivae, splendidus, tanquam Chrystallum procedens ex throno Dei & agni: Apoc. 22,1. Aquae vivae prodeentes Hierosolymis. Zach.13, 8.”

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 39–40: “Boves portantes mare optime praefigurant duodecim Apostolos [...]. Numerus boum duodenarius quam optime quadrat cum duodenario Apostolorum, quos elegit Christus, ut testes ejus essent Doctrinae & Vitae, non solum er Judaeam & Samariam, sed & per universum mundum, in quo praedicatur Evangelium; hinc boves hi dispositi versus quatuor mundi plagas, denotant missionem Apostolorum in omnem mundum, ut docerent omnes Gentes: Matt. 28, 19 [...].”

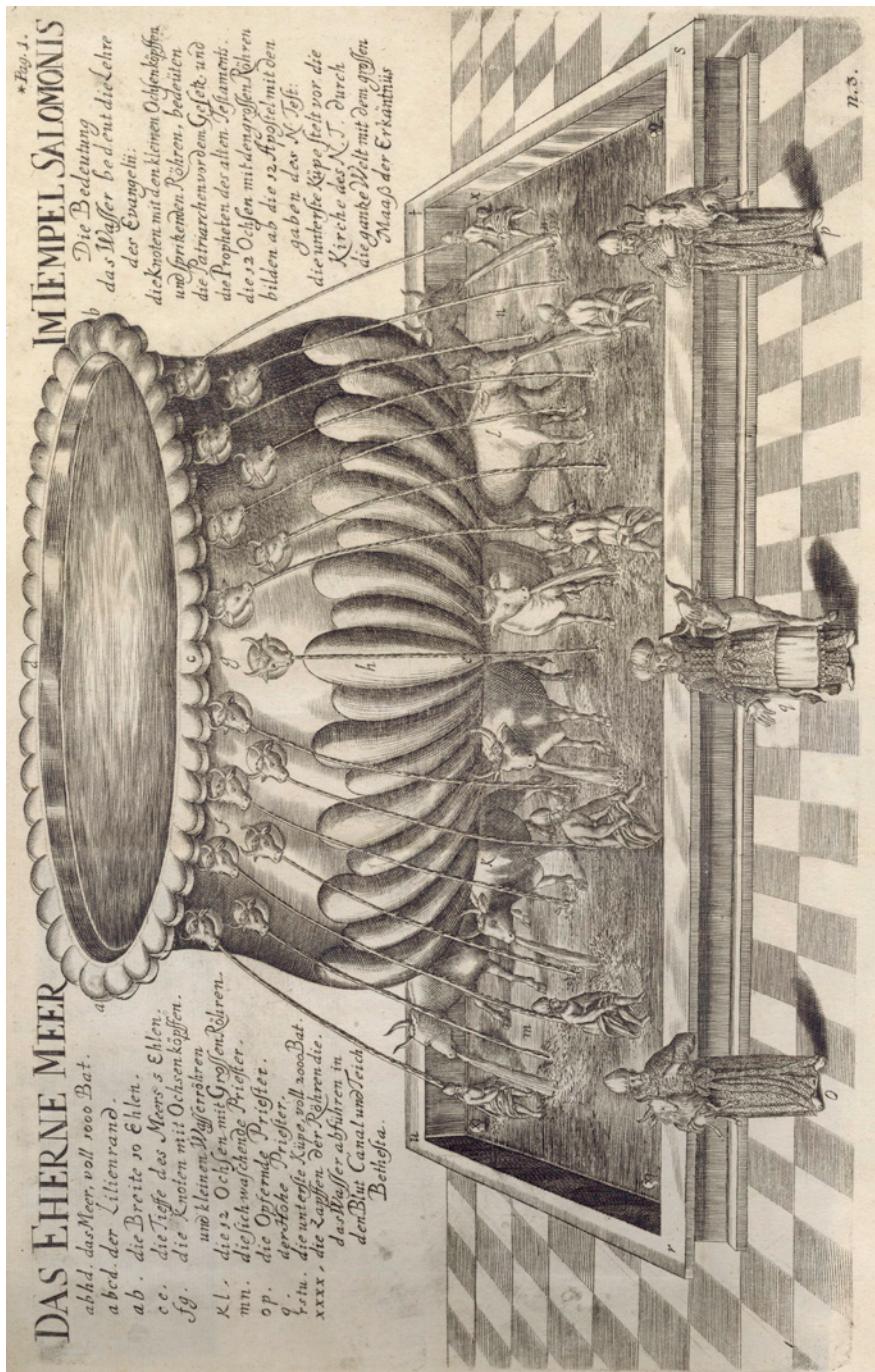


FIGURE 4 Engraving of molten sea with Conrad Melius's Christological musings. From *Conrad Melius, Antiquarius sacer, quamplurima dubia atque obscuria Sacrae Scripturae dicta, ex statu ecclesiastico, politico, militari atque oeconomico [...] (Frankfurt, 1729)*, 1.

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the shape of bulls.¹⁴⁹ According to Melius, the root פְקֻעַ was generally not used in Hebrew, but meant “to split” or “to crack” in Aramaic, which would be close enough to the Hebrew equivalent בָקַע [cleave, break open]. This would mean that the term [פְקֻעִים] could be rendered into *sculpturas striatas* [cleaved/channeled sculptures]. In 1 Kings 7:24, the Vulgate provides the phrase *duo ordines sculpturarum histriatarum* [two rows of cleaved sculptures]. Melius explained the somewhat unusual term *histriatae*¹⁵⁰ through the use of an analogy. Just as the word *historiatae* referred to something that possessed *historia* [history], the *histriatae* must then refer to something that had *striae*, channels or pipes. Therefore, the gourds must have been equipped with pipes through which the water from the basin flowed.¹⁵¹ This somewhat daring philological exercise allowed Melius to incorporate the gourds harmoniously into his Christological analysis. If the water of the vessel symbolized the teachings of the gospel, the gourds represented the “assembly of the patriarchs, who lived at the time of promise and Old Testament prophecies and through whom the divine word had been propagated, first transmitted as the *proto-gospel* in paradise, but then confirmed by numerous visions and promises.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Melius may have profited here from a possible scribal error, which rendered פְקֻעִים into בְּקָרִים. See Busink, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem*, vol. 1, 328.

¹⁵⁰ In regard to the Vulgate’s translation of פְקֻעִים into *sculpturae histriatae*, the theologian Luc de Bruges, for example, writes: “Duo ordines sculpturarum histriatarum erant fusiles. Histriatarum aut ystriatarum legunt plerique libri: quam quia vox est ignota, multi corrupte scripserunt. Quidam autem non histriatarum sed striatarum legendum putat [...]. Striae autem sculpturae sunt quae striis exornatae sunt. Striae sunt quasi canaliculae, aut sulci, per lignum aut aes aut lapidem ducti”; see *Critici sacri*, ed. John Pearson et al., vol. 2: *Annotata ad Lib. I Regum* (Amsterdam, 1698), 40.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 14–15: “Circa limbum hujus maris erant duo ordines colocynthtarum fusarum in fusione ejus. Hic inquirendum, quid fuerint פְקֻעִים, & cujus figurae? Radix פְקֻעַ apud Hebraeos est inusitata. Chaldaeis notat findere, discindere, quod apud Hebraeos בְּקָעַ, per commutationem literarum ejusdem organi בְ & פְ; hinc פְקֻעַ exasciatum, behauen; propterea vulgata reddit: sculpturas striatas. Codices Regii legunt histriatas, quasi dices historias, ac si depictae ibi fuissent historiae. Sed sculptura striata idem est quod habere strias; striae autem sunt caliculi vel sulci, qui per aes aut lignum ducuntur ad elegantiam, ut una pars emineat, altera subsideat [...]. Erant פְקֻעִים protuberantes figurae ovales, instar segmenti cucurbitae sylvestris, sculptura striata & boum capitibus ornatae, per quas tanquam epistomia defluebat aqua.”

¹⁵² Ibid., 38: “Epistomia superiora significant Concionem Patriarcharum, qui vixerunt tempore Promissionis, & Prophetarum v.t. per quos Verbum Dei propagatum, maxime verbum *Protoevangelii* in paradiſo primum traditum, & apparitionibus variisque promissionibus confirmatum.”

But not all problems could be solved as elegantly and smoothly, especially if the reputation and skill of the divine architect was at stake. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, scholars had amassed a bounty of charts and tables to determine the equivalents of these ancient measurements, and they came in handy at these times.¹⁵³ The vessel had a circular form with a diameter of 10 cubits and a circumference of 30 cubits. Does this mean that its most ingenious designer did not even know the value of the magical number π ?¹⁵⁴ Such questions could certainly be quite nerve-wracking to pious students of theology, and probably also to their even more pious teachers, as shown by the example of an anonymous student at the University of Leipzig who interrupted a lecture with the observation that if the molten sea was a perfect circle, then its circumference had to be $31\frac{1}{2}$ cubits and not just thirty cubits as the Bible proposed. The cheeky young student was probably familiar only with the mere basics of geometry because he claimed to have “heard that the ratio between a circle’s diameter to its circumference was approximately 100:314.”¹⁵⁵ This was still before the time of the mathematical Talmudist-genius Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer (1720–1797),¹⁵⁶ who, during the late eighteenth century, would argue that by applying to the terms *וְנִיר* [line, measuring line] from 1 Kings 7:23 and *וְנֵר* [line] from 2 Chr. 4:2 the numeric value of each Hebrew letter, dividing the two sums, and multiplying it by three, it would give the exact value of π . And it may also have been before the Swiss mathematical wizard

¹⁵³ Villalpando, for example, provided a huge apparatus with charts and tables of different ancient measurements. See Bautista Villalpando, *Apparatus urbis ac templi Hierosolymitani* (Rome, 1604); also Edward Bernard, *De mensuribus et ponderibus antiquis libri tres* (Oxford, 1688); Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 808–9.

¹⁵⁴ On the question and value of π in the Bible see, for example, Herman C. Schepler, “The Chronology of π ,” *Mathematics Magazine* 23 (1950), 165–70; Albert Zuidhof, “King Solomon’s Molten Sea and (π),” *Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982), 179–84; Michael A.B. Deakin and Hans Lausch, “The Bible and Pi,” *Mathematical Gazette* 82 (1998), 162–66; G.M. Hollenback, “The Value of π and the Circumference of the ‘Molten Sea’ in 3 Kingdoms 7, 10,” *Biblica* 79 (1998), 409–12.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Martin Mulsow, *Freigeister im Gottsched-Kreis: Wolfianismus, studentische Aktivitäten und Religionskritik in Leipzig 1740–1745* (Göttingen, 2007), 228, n. 13: “Wenn nun das eherne Meer ein vollkommener Zirkel gewesen ist, so muß bey dem Durchmesser von 10 Ellen der Umfang $31\frac{1}{2}$ Elle seyn. Man kann nicht glauben, wie sehr mein Mathematicus mit diesen wichtigen Einwürfe alle Studiosos Theologiae ängstigte, mit denen er zu sprechen kam. Er konnte in der That es nicht beweisen, daß der Durchmesser eines Zirkels zum Umkreise sich beynahe verhalte wie 100: 314 [...].”

¹⁵⁶ Immanuel Etkes, *The Gaon of Vilna: The Man and His Image*, ed. and trans. by Jeffrey M. Green (Berkeley, 2002).

Leonard Euler (1707–1783) established the use of π in his famous *Introductio in analysin infinitorum* (1748).¹⁵⁷

Nonetheless, such questions seemed to have been quite unsettling for young theologians and their more senior peers. While the less mathematically savvy found nothing wrong with the passage or simply chose to ignore the problem altogether,¹⁵⁸ others were struggling to find a feasible answer, especially once the likes of Spinoza¹⁵⁹ were citing it to undermine the credibility of the revealed text.¹⁶⁰ Among those who took up the challenge was Samuel Reyher (1635–1714),¹⁶¹ professor of mathematics at the University of Kiel. To

¹⁵⁷ Alfred S. Posamentier et al., *π : The Biography of the World's Most Mysterious Number* (New York, 2004), 28–32.

¹⁵⁸ See Sturm, *Dissertatio de mari aeneo*, 1554: “Quod enim difficultatem illam attinet, num diametro 10. ulnarum recte respondeat circumferentia 30. cubit. Lyra, Piscator, Osiander, Corn. a Lapide, Mariana, Tossanus, Sanctius aliquie, rationem illam pro vera habentes, Matheseos nimirum penitus ingari, hoc in loco ullam difficultatem ne quidem suspiciantur.”

¹⁵⁹ See Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. Jonathan Israel and trans. Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, ed. by Karl Ameriks) (New York, 2007), 34–35: “The same must also be said for Solomon’s building of the Temple, if indeed that was revealed by God, i.e., that all its measurements were revealed to Solomon according to his understanding and assumptions. For as we have no reason to believe Solomon was a mathematician, we are entitled to assert that he did not know the true ratio between the circumference of a circle and its diameter, and supposed like most craftsmen that it was 3 to 1. For if it is permissible to say that we do not understand the text of 1 Kings 7.23, I simply do not know what we can understand from Scripture, since the edifice is merely reported in that passage in a purely descriptive manner. If one is permitted to claim that Scripture meant something else here, but for some reason unknown to us it was decided to put it this way, the consequence is the complete and utter subversion of the whole Bible. Everyone will be able to say the same with equal justification about every single passage. It will be possible to perpetrate and justify every absurd or malicious thing that human perversity can dream up, without impugning the authority of Scripture”; on Spinoza’s treatment of the Hebrew Bible see Steven Nadler, “The Bible Hermeneutics of Baruch de Spinoza,” in Magne Saebø, ed., *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, vol. 2: *From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Göttingen, 2008), 827–36.

¹⁶⁰ Among them was Samuel Reyher, professor of mathematics at the University of Kiel. In his *Mathesis Mosaica* (Kiel, 1679), 713, Reyher writes: “Quoniam ergo maris aenei perimeter exacte triplam rationem ad diametrum ejus habuisse dicitur, hinc athei & Sacrarum literarum contemptores triumphum ante victoriam tumidis canunt buccis, inter quos novissime deprehendimus Benedictum, si Deo placet, *Spinozam* [...]”

¹⁶¹ On Reyher, see, for instance, Manfred Büttner, “Samuel Reyher und die Wandlungen im geographischen Denken gegen Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts,” *Sudhoffs Archiv* 63 (1979), 239–60.

Reyher, the solution of the puzzle lay in the Hebrew phrase **וְשָׁפַתּוּ כִּמְעֵדֶת שׂוֹנֵן** [and its brim was like a cup, like the blossom of a lily] (Fig. 5).¹⁶² According to Reyher, Spinoza had not properly understood the meaning of the term **שׂוֹנֵן** [lily]. Otherwise he would have concluded that the shape of the brim of the vessel must have been a hexagon, since a lily had six petals.¹⁶³ “Judging him by his own words,” Reyher points out, “we must say that Spinoza did not understand Holy Scripture at all.” “Reyher’s proof” was gratefully adopted by such self-proclaimed defenders of Lutheran orthodoxy as the eighteenth-century pastor and superintendent from Pegau in Saxony Salomon Deyling (1677–1755),¹⁶⁴ who engaged in a lifelong crusade against what were in his eyes the subversive spirits of Grotius, Huet, Le Clerc, Simon, and Spinoza.¹⁶⁵

But there were alternative solutions to Reyher’s. Sometimes, however, it took some tweaking of the biblical account to arrive at a somewhat acceptable explanation. Conrad Melius, for example, approached the problem from a different angle. According to him, the Hebrew phrase **קָרְבָּן שְׁלָשִׁים בְּאַפָּה יָסַב אֲתֹן סְבִיב** [and a line of thirty cubits measured all around it] was not referring to the vessel, but to the bottom structure in which the twelve oxen stood and where the priests were performing their ritual washings. Melius pointed out that the term **קָרְבָּן** could be derived from the verb **קָרַבְתָּ** [expect, wait for],

¹⁶² 1 Kings 7:26; 2 Chr. 4:5.

¹⁶³ Samuel Reyher, *Mathesis Mosaica*, 714–16: “Si enim [Spinoza] intellexisset voculam **לִילּוֹן**, facile etiam capere potuisset veram Maris figuram fuisse sexangularem. Nam **לִילּוֹן** Lilium sex habet folia, quorum explicatorum cuspides perfectum repraesentant sexangulum, unde in sancta Lingua a **שְׁלָשׁ** senario numero nomen fortitum est [...]. Deinde stupor hominis inde appetat, quod nesciat ex proportione circumferentiae ac diametri proposita colligere veram figuram. Quia enim diameter praecise triens fuit circumferentiae, necessario sequitur, Mare fuisse sexangulare, minime vero rotundum, prout perperam fingit Spinoza.”

¹⁶⁴ Christian Siegfried, “Salomon Deyling,” in *ADB* 5 (1875), 108–9.

¹⁶⁵ Salomon Deyling, *Observationum sacrarum pars prima, in qua multa Scripturae Vet. ac Novi Testamenti dubia vexata solvuntur ... atque ab audaci recentiorum criticorum depravatione, sigillatim H. Grotii, B. Spinozae, R. Simonii, PP. D. Huetii, Jo. Clerici, aliorumque solide vindicantur* (Leipzig, 1708), 68: “Nam geometrae magna evidenter demonstrant, quod hexagono inscripto in circulo, diameter circuli sit tertia pars ambitus ipsius hexagoni. Deinde ipsa voce **לִילּוֹן**, quae *lilium* notat, satis indicatur, figuram maris *sexangularem* fuisse. Nomen enim a **שְׁלָשׁ** habet sive numero senario, quia lilia sex folia habent, & perfectum sexangulum repraesentant, quali schemate *mare Salomoneum* exhibuit SAM. REYHERUS, Celeb. Juris & Mathematum Professor Kilon. in *Mathesi Mosaica*. p. 715. Nec obstat, quod mare hoc **לִילּוֹן rotundum** dicitur, quia non tantum figura perfecte circularis, sed etiam sexangularis suo modo rotunda dici potest.”



FIGURE 5 *Samuel Reyher's discussion of the dimensions and volume of the molten sea.*

From Samuel Reyher, Mathesis Mosaica (Kiel, 1679), 715.

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whose Niphil form נִקְוָה could be translated as “flow together” or “converge.”¹⁶⁶ Therefore, the term must refer to the mass of water that gathered at the foot of the vessel, which could be supported by a passage from Genesis 1:9, where the Septuagint translates the Hebrew הַמִּים as συναχθήτω τὸ ὄδωρ [let the water flow together], just as מִקְוָה-מִם in Leviticus 11:36 can be translated as *receptaculum aquarum* [water reservoir]. This would mean, according to Melius, that no numeric value for the circumference of the vessel is given at all. Rather, the 30 cubits were referring to the diameter of the lower basin and therefore, the passage should be translated as *cupa, quae circumdabat illud, circumcirca 30 cubitos* (scil. *tenebat in diametro*) [the tub, which surrounded it, measured thirty cubits in diameter].¹⁶⁷ The solution of the problem of the circumference of the vessel, however, was only one side of the story. According to 1 Kings 7:26, the capacity of the vessel was 2000 baths, but the account in 2 Chronicles 4:3 states that it was 3000 baths. Since the biblical text provided, according to the Lutheran *hermeneutica sacra*, factual truth, how could a vessel hold both 2000 and 3000 baths at the same time?¹⁶⁸

During the seventeenth century, such problems were in fact the expertise of Michael Walther (1593–1662),¹⁶⁹ professor of theology at the University of Helmstedt, who was convinced that “no real contradiction could exist in

¹⁶⁶ The *Niphal* stem in Hebrew does not really have an equivalent in English. Its function can be passive, middle, reflexive, and resultative. See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1990), 378–95.

167 Melius, *De mari aeneo*, 8–10: “Per קו ים אתו סיב non intelligo *lineam peripheriae superiores* vasis, sed potius *Cupam inferiorem* sub mari, in qua boves stabant, quae aquas defluentes excipiebat & in qua Sacerdotes se lavabant, ita ut verba Textus sic interpretari possint: *Cupa, quae circumdabat illud circum circa 30. cubitos.* (scil. *tenebat in diametro*) [...]. Suadet significatio nominis קו, quod derivatur a קוה Expectare in Niphah נקורה colligi, confluere, zusammen fliessen, hinc Gen. 1.19 [sic] קוו הרים confluant aquae. LXX. συναχθήτω τὸ ὄδωρ, & מקורה [sic] receptaculum aquarum, fossa, fovea concipiendis aquis facta, Lev. 2.36 [sic] [...]. Haec ergo cupa [...] erat receptaculum inferius, in quo colligebantur aquae per epistomia maris delapsae, ad lotiones sacerdotum [...]. Haec Cupa dicitur fuisse 30. cubitorum. Quod non de peripheria, sed de diametro intelligendum [...].”

¹⁶⁸ Busink, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem*, vol. 1, 328.

¹⁶⁹ Carl Gustav Adolf Siegfried, "Michael Walther," in *ADB* 41 (1896), 119–20; also Hans-Peter Hasse, "Wather, Michael," in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 8 (Tübingen, 2005), 1300–1301; more recently, Wolfgang Sommer, "Gottesfurcht und Fürstenherrschaft: Das Verständnis der Obrigkeit in Predigten der Hofprediger Justus Gesenius und Michael Walther," in Sommer, *Politik, Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Luthertum der frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1999), 91–110.

Scripture.”¹⁷⁰ Walther,¹⁷¹ among others,¹⁷² pointed out that the vessel had been devised in such a fashion that it could hold 3000 baths at its maximum capacity, but would generally only contain 2000 baths, as the passage from Kings suggested. This hypothesis was also embraced by Samuel Reyher, who found a very practical explanation for this circumstance:

Since then the depth of the vessel was five cubits or thirty-five spans, but the ordinary height of a human only six feet or twenty-four spans, its usual measure was only as much as two thousand baths, so that the priests were not in danger of drowning when they were performing their washings.¹⁷³

Reyher apparently had not done his research properly, because a few years earlier, in 1675, the theologian Gottfried Thym (1647–1717) from Zwickau in Saxony had published a small treatise on the brazen laver of the tabernacle, in which he made frequent references to the molten sea. Thym pointed out that the priests could not have plunged into the vessel, because their elaborate vestments would have been in their way if they had tried to climb up to the vessel’s brim past the brazen oxen and the gourds that adorned it, not to mention the impending danger of drowning.¹⁷⁴ Fortunately, there were other ways of explaining the two different numbers. Salomon Glassius,¹⁷⁵ for example, one

¹⁷⁰ Michael Walther, *Harmonia totius S. Scripturae sive brevis et plana conciliatio locorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti apparenter sibi contradictientium* (Strasbourg, 1630), 2: “In quo ostenditur, veram contradictionem in Scriptura locum habere non posse.”

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 234: “Quidam, capacitatem quidem maris fuisse tantam, ut capere potuerit ter mille bathos, ordinarie interim ex Regis instituto bis mille tantum bathos fuisse infusos.”

¹⁷² See, for example, Hugo Grotius, *Opera omnia theologica*, vol. 1: *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum* (London, 1679), 148: “Duo millia batos capiebat: Ad summum poterat continere ter mille; sed non solebat impleri nisi ad bis mille, 11 Paralipp. IV. 5.”

¹⁷³ Samuel Reyher, *Mathesis Mosaica*, 717–18: “Quia igitur profunditas fuit V cubitorum sive xxxv palmorum, ordinaria autem hominis statuara sit VI pedum sive xxiv palmorum, ideo ordinaria & usualis mensura tantum 2000 batorum fuit, ne scilicet Sacerdotes lavantes submersionis periculum subirent.”

¹⁷⁴ Gottfried Thym, *Labrum aeneum*, 50: “In maris factam fuisse lotionem non credibile, cum alioquin Sacerdotes boves, in quos positum fuit [...] ascendere oportuisset, quod repuisset horum vestitus, nec subtilissime elaborata ornamenta mari superimposita [...] colocynthides denominata, id facile admisissent. Praeterea si ipsum mare ingressi essent sacerdotes, vitam suam summo submersionis periculo exposuissent, cum profunditas aquae juxta altitudinem maris fuerit [...] quin[que] cubitorum [...].”

¹⁷⁵ On Glassius, see Julia König, “Der Generalsuperintendent Salomon Glass (1593–1656),” *Gothaisches Museums Jahrbuch* 10 (2007), 185–194; see also the collection of papers

of the doyens of seventeenth-century Lutheran orthodoxy, pointed out that the higher value probably referred to dry measure, whereas the lower number would refer to liquid measure. According to Glassius, theologians such as Matthias Hafenreffer (1561–1619)¹⁷⁶ and Jewish scholars such as David Kimhi¹⁷⁷ had suggested that “a vessel that could hold 2000 baths of liquid could hold 3000 baths of dry matter,” because “a pile of dry substance, heaped onto the entire measure, generally corresponds to another half of the whole.”¹⁷⁸

Although such views were endorsed by many,¹⁷⁹ they were not always properly understood or reproduced. Possibly partly due to negligence, partly due to ignorance, the seventeenth-century French Protestant Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713),¹⁸⁰ for example, claimed that Jews had argued that the molten sea

recently published under the title *Hebraistik—Hermeneutik—Homiletik: Die “Philologia Sacra” im frühneuzeitlichen Bibelstudium*, ed. Christoph Bultmann and Lutz Danneberg (New York, 2011).

¹⁷⁶ Heinrich Fausel, “Hafenreffer, Matthias,” in *NDB* 7 (1966), 460; also Eberhard Knobloch and Karin Reich, “Die Kreisquadratur Matthias Hafenreffers,” in *Zwischen Copernicus und Kepler: M. Michael Maestlinus, Mathematicus Goeppingensis, 1550–1631: Vorträge auf dem Symposium, veranstaltet in Tübingen vom 11. bis 13. Oktober 2000 von der Fakultät für Physik der Universität Tübingen*, ed. Gerhard Betsch and Jürgen Hamel (Frankfurt, 2002), 157–83.

¹⁷⁷ On Kimhi, see Frank Talmadge, *David Kimhi, the Man and the Commentaries* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975).

¹⁷⁸ Salomon Glassius, *Philologia sacra* (Leipzig, 1713), 104: “Vas namque, quod capit *bis mille bathos* liquidorum, capere potest *ter mille bathos* aridorum: cumulus enim aridorum, mensurae superingestus, dimidio totius respondere solet, ein aufgehaufft Simri giebt anderthalb gestrichens, quae sunt verba Doct. HAFENREFFERI in explicat. Templi Ezech. p. 62. Et hoc foodere duo ista loca copulat R. DAVID KIMCHI, in comm. qui ex versione Chaldaica idipsum probat, quae ita transfert: קְרֵנָן אֶלְפַּחַן בְּתִין בְּרִטְבָּא מְחֻסִּיל duo millia bathorum in humido capiens seu comprehens.”

¹⁷⁹ One such was Johannes Lundius, who writes: “Die beste Meynung scheinet derjenigen zu seyn/ die davor halten/ Bath sey eine Maasse gewesen beydes der truckenen und nassen Waaren [...] welcher Meynung auch Kimchi ist apud Glass. Phil. sacr. lib. 1. tract. 2. artic. 2, num. 30. Schindler. lex. pentagl. in בְּתִין p. 259 & in יְמִים p. 762. Hafenreff. temp. Ezech. p. 23. Walter harmon. Prückner. Vindic. ad h.i. und die Hebräer insgemein/ wie e Schilte Haggiborim ap. Wagenseil. Mischn. Sota c.2. sect. 2. not. 4 zu sehen/ da der Unterscheid zwischen nassen und truckenen Waaren gemacht [...]; see Lundius, *Die Alten Jüdischen Heilighümer*, 309.

¹⁸⁰ On Jurieu, see Frederik Reinier Jacob Knetsch, *Pierre Jurieu, theoloog en politicus der refuge* (Kampen, 1967); also Emile Kaeppler, *Bibliographie critique de l'œuvre imprimée de Pierre Jurieu, 1637–1713* (Paris, 2002); on Jurieu's dispute with Pierre Bayle, see Hubert Bos, *L'Affaire Bayle: la bataille entre Pierre Bayle et Pierre Jurieu devant le consistoire de l'Église wallonne de Rotterdam* (Saint Étienne, 2006).

could hold only 2000 baths of dry matter, but 3000 baths of liquid, because fluids would fill even the tiniest furrows in the vessel.¹⁸¹ Such confusions certainly added to the matter's difficulty, and Jurieu, apparently not a big fan of numbers and measures, with an air of resignation adds that problems such as the exact dimensions of the molten sea prove "that we have no clue at all about the measures of the [ancient] Hebrews."¹⁸² Jurieu's defeatist tone indicates how complex a topic such as the molten sea actually was and how difficult it was for theologians and scholars to grapple with it. It required not only a profound knowledge of ancient languages, a mathematical brain (which Jurieu evidently did not have), and a familiarity with ancient measurements and weights, but also a full grasp of the typological significance of the artifact. Given this complexity, Iken's account provides only a mere framework of the subject, and it was the role of Reimarus as the teacher to fill in the gaps.

The teacher would have to provide historical details, including the exact location of the vessel, its form, shape, and capacity, as well as its possible utilization by the priests. He would probably have read to students the two biblical accounts from Kings and Chronicles and then tried to explain the obvious mathematical difficulty, at the same time surveying the various approaches to reconcile the apparent contradictions. Most important, however, would have been to follow this discussion with an analysis of the *sensus mysticus*, as Melius had done so masterfully and Reimarus so passionately in his description of ancient Jewish sacrificial practices over ten years earlier.

Reimarus's written observations demonstrate that much had changed since his first year of teaching. Whereas even the mathematician Samuel Reyher did not miss the opportunity to conclude his treatise on the molten sea by pointing to its Christological significance,¹⁸³ Reimarus's analysis in front of his students is virtually "de-theologized." He refers neither to Villalpando nor to Melius,

¹⁸¹ Pierre Jurieu, *Histoire critique des dogmes et des cultes* (Amsterdam, 1704), 250: "Pour ce qui est de la contradiction qui semble entre le Livre des Rois & les Chroniques. Les Juifs y répondent, en disant, qu'elle contenoit 2000 baths de choses seches; mais comme les choses liquides s'arrangent mieux & remplissent tous les vides où les choses seches ne sauroient entrer, elle contenoit 3000 baths de liqueur."

¹⁸² Ibid., 250: "Nonobstant toutes ces conjectures, la quantité d'eau qu'on donne à ce Vaisseau, si peu proportionnée à la capacité qu'on lui attribuë, me fait souçonner que nous n'entendons rien dans les mesures Hebraïques."

¹⁸³ Samuel Reyher, *Mathemasis Mosaica*, 722: "Mare hoc aeneum fuisse typum Christianae Ecclesiae, & praeprimis Sacramenti baptismatis puto, quia in v.t. per lavacrum ejus initabantur, ad significandum ritum baptismi in N.T. quo non tantum Christus initiatus est, sed omnes quoque Sacerdotes Christiani initiandi sunt. Mare hoc tanquam Lilium, Christianae Ecclesiae symbolum, spinosis & venenatis colocynnis quamplurimis circun-

but focuses instead solely on the antiquarian and philological aspects of the subject. He begins fairly conventionally with the philological observation that the term **הַיָּם מִזְקָה** [molten sea] reflects the idiomatic nature of the Hebrew language, since the word **מִזְקָה** is ultimately referring only to a large amount of water.¹⁸⁴ But the lesson becomes more interesting once Reimarus introduces the somewhat complex subject of the molten sea's capacity:

The capacity of the vessel was certainly up to 3000 baths of measured liquid: but it held such a great quantity only if it had been filled to the highest level [...]. But if it was true what has been passed down from the sources of the Jews, namely [...] that 310 thumbs cubed measured one bath, or 432 *ova* [eggs], then a vessel, whose diameter is 10 cubits could certainly not hold 100 baths; therefore, the bath of the ancients was much smaller than what the Jews estimate.¹⁸⁵

It is hard to miss the somewhat skeptical undertone here, especially since we know that a particular predilection of the Reimarus of the *Apologie* was to ridicule the numeric values in the Bible and expose their inconsistencies. What Reimarus implies here is that a calculation of the actual volumes yields unreasonably large numbers, which seem somewhat disproportional to the size of the vessel. Most scholarly treatises of the time had estimated that one bath equaled 432 *ova* [eggs].¹⁸⁶ According to Reimarus, if only 100 baths equaled 43,200 *ova*, it would be almost impossible for a vessel whose diameter was 10 cubits to hold 2000 baths or 864,000 *ova*, not to mention the 1,296,000 *ova* for the maximum capacity of 3000 baths. It is quite symptomatic that in the same

datum erat, ad indigitandas futuras Ecclesiae Christianae persecutio[n]es & anxietates [...]."

¹⁸⁴ Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conradi Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, 67: "Mare aeneum dicitur vas aeneum, quia Hebrei nomine maris omnem congregationem aquae: licet minorem, appellant. V. Rel. pal. c. xxxviii, pp. 238 seq."

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 67: "Capacitas vasis utique fuit ad MMM. bathos mensurae liquidae: sed tum demum tantam aquae vim capiebat, cum ad summum repletum fuisset [...]. Nam si verum esset, quod ex Judaeos mente tradidi ad PP. II. de mensuris §. 25 batum replere pollices cubicos 310, aut ova 432 capere; nequidem c[entum] bathos caperet vas, cujus diameter est 10 cubitorum; ut proinde multo minor fuerit bathus veterum, quam Judaei existimant."

¹⁸⁶ See, for example, Johann Caspar Eisenschmid, *Disquisitio de ponderibus & mensuris Veterum Romanorum, Graecorum, Hebraeorum*, in *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum*, vol. 28 (Venice, 1765), 197; also Iken, *Antiquitates*, 451.

breath in which Reimarus points out this difficulty, he defers to Jurieu's observation that "we know only little about the measurements of the ancients."¹⁸⁷

We cannot expect to encounter the Reimarus of the *Apologie* here, the skeptic who would disclose to his students his true sentiments about the Mosaic Law. Nonetheless, the neglect of instances of Christology is certainly a profound shift from how he had presented the subject to his students some ten years earlier. At times, we are able to profit from our extraordinary position as Reimarus's confidants because we know that Reimarus was working simultaneously on his radical work. We are therefore much better equipped than his students to discern subtle references to his critique of revelation. There are moments in his lecture when we can catch glimpses of sarcasm and irony that would become such a trademark of his radical work and that innocent bystanders would generally not even notice.

This is also the case when he moves to the subject of Jewish sacrifices. We may recall that in his Reland lecture, Reimarus had used the subject as an occasion to show to his students how the purification offering was a perfect representation of Christ's agony and death. This time, however, the focus and the tone are entirely different, which becomes clear in his brief introduction about the origin of Jewish sacrificial practices. Rather than taking a position on the matter himself, he directs his students to the works of his teachers Fabricius and Wolf, who had stressed their divine provenance.¹⁸⁸ But Reimarus becomes bolder when he moves to the different types of Jewish sacrifices. Iken, like Reland, had noted the classification of the sacrifices in regard to their degree of holiness, but he deviated slightly in the terminology he used.¹⁸⁹ In regard to the purification offerings, for example,¹⁹⁰ he points out that Jews still differentiated between the חטאות החיצנות or *sacrificia pro peccato exteriora* [outer purification offering] and the חטאות הפנימיות or *sacrificia pro peccato interiora*

¹⁸⁷ Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conradi Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, 67: "Caeterum facile assentior Jurieu in hist. dogm. et cultum PP. II. p. 200. parum nos scire de mensuris veterum."

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 94: "Sacrificiorum origo divina assertitur a pluribus lautatis Fabricio in bibliogr[aphia] ant[iquaria] c. xi. §. 1 et 9 Buddeo in diss[ertatione] de pietate philosophica: in selectis iuris nat[uralis] et gent[ium] p. 231. et hist[oria] eccles[istica] V[eteris] Test[amenti] P.1. p. 145."

¹⁸⁹ Iken, *Antiquitates*, 158: "Ratione sanctitatis sunt vel קדשי קדשים vel Sanctissima vel קליים Minus sancta. Illa erant, quae tota cedebant Deo, ut holocausta & sacrificia piacularia interiora, aut unde comedebant soli Sacerdotes Masculi, idque non nisi in loco sancto, ut piacularia exteriora, pro delicto & salutaria publica [...]."

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 160: "Discrimen inter sacrificia publica & privata in hoc genere eo magis attendendum, quo magis distincta utrorumque jura, tam quoad animalia oblata, quam quoad personas offerentes, erant."

[interior purification offering], based on where the priest dispensed the collected blood, which not only signified their different degrees of holiness, but ultimately also had an impact on who was permitted to partake of the feast. Whereas the *sacrificia piacularia interiora*, along with the *holocausta*, were part of the *קדשי קדשים* [holy of holies] and almost entirely reserved for God, the priests were the full beneficiaries of the *sacrificia piacularia exteriora*.¹⁹¹

This had led Hermann Witsius (1636–1708), professor of theology at the University of Franeker, to come up with an assumption that combined an appreciation for the ancient Jewish priesthood with Christology.¹⁹² “Sacrifices,” Witsius had observed, “were at times yielded as food for the priests, who thus ingested the sin and accepted the offence committed by the people.” This was, according to Witsius, exactly what had happened to Christ, who had become through his sacrifice both priest and victim at the same time.¹⁹³ Witsius could bolster his argument with a passage from Leviticus, where Moses rebukes Aaron’s sons for not having eaten the meat of the sin offering in the most holy area in order to make expiation for the whole community.¹⁹⁴ Reimarus, however, apparently not fully convinced by Witsius, presents a slightly modified explanation to his students:

Exterior purification offerings were eaten by the priests. Generally, as Witsius in volume 1 on page 512 of his *Miscellaneorum sacrorum libri quatuor* concludes, on the account that the priests by this deed ingested the sin or that they took on the transgression of the people: Lev. 10.17; albeit another reason for the ingestion can be given: namely that the

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 158: “[...] ut *holocausta & sacrificia piacularia interiora*, aut unde comedebant soli Sacerdotes Masculi, idque non nisi in loco sancto, ut *piacularia exteriora, pro delicto & salutaria publica* [...]”

¹⁹² On Witsius, see Jan van Genderen, *Herman Witsius: Bijdrag tot de Kennis der Gereformeerde Theologie* (The Hague, 1954); also, Richard A. Muller, “The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Orthodoxy: A Study in the Theology of Herman Witsius and Wilhelmus à Brakel,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994), 75–100.

¹⁹³ Herman Witsius, *Miscellaneorum sacrorum libri quatuor* 3rd ed. (Herborn, 1712), vol. 1, 512: “[...] aliquando *Sacerdotibus cedebat in escam*, qui eo pacto *incorporabant peccatum, & recipiebant in se reatum populi*: Lev. x.17. ut ostenderetur, aliquando *Sacerdotem & victimam unam fore personam*; quemadmodum in Christo consummatum est.”

¹⁹⁴ Lev. 10.17: “Why did you not eat the sin offering in the sacred area? For it is most holy, and God has given it to you that you may remove the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement on their behalf before the Lord.”

priests had something, from which they could live; just as it was the case also with other offerings.¹⁹⁵

Although Reimarus's choice of words is still carefully weighed, his alternative suggestion has a distinctly negative ring when he somewhat qualifies the selfless act of the priests. It is certainly not too far-fetched to discover here the glimmers of his criticism of the ancient Jewish priesthood, who basically lived at the expense of the people. If some of the students in his classroom were astute enough to detect it, they had obviously no idea what still lay beyond!

The “Lesson Plan” Left in the Drawer

But in the evening, when the corridors of the *Gymnasium illustre* emptied and students had gone home to do their homework, say their prayers, and get their well-deserved rest, a migraine-ridden¹⁹⁶ Reimarus might have been pacing in his study and relieving his qualms by putting them on paper.¹⁹⁷ What he held back from his wife, friends, and students, he did not have to hold back here. Much time had passed since a young Reimarus had started his teaching career at the *Gymnasium illustre* with his lecture about Reland's *Antiquitates*. Looking back at his lecture notes from his first years at the *Gymnasium*, he would have been reminded again how passionately he had then introduced his students to the world of ancient Israel and the Holy Land.¹⁹⁸ He had presented its

¹⁹⁵ Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conradi Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, 95: “Piacularia exteriora comedebantur a Sacerdotibus. Scilicet ut Witsius in misc. t 1. p. 512. coniicit, ideo, ut sacerdotes eo pacto incorporarent peccatum, seu reciperent in se reatum populi, Lev. 10.17. quamvis et haec ratio dari possit comedendi, ut haberent Sacerdotes, unde viverent; quemadmodum et reliquia sacrificia comedebantur.”

¹⁹⁶ In a letter to Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini, Reimarus complains about his tormented physical condition: “Recte autem suspicaris, obscisse mihi valetudinem, qua scilicet iam per triennium adeo dubia et fragili utor, ut ex frequenti insomnia et capitis doloribus imparem me literis et seriae meditationi esse sentiam: praesertim, cum ea sit suscepti muneras prope dixerim miserrima conditio, ut instituendae iuventuti senas quotidie horas tribuere, et reliquum fere omne tempus in recuperandis viribus exhaustis conterere necese sit [...]”; see letter Reimarus to Cardinal Querini, 4 July 1743, vQS. Ms. 257.

¹⁹⁷ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 41: “Bloß meine eigene Gemüths-Beruhigung war vom ersten Anfange der Bewegungsgrund, warum ich meine Gedanken niederschrieb [...].”

¹⁹⁸ Reimarus, *Observationes*, p. 1: “Terra Sancta dicitur II. Maccab. 1.7. & frequentibus Patribusque, nempe propter sanctissimum DEUM, ibi inter populum suum olim habitantem et propter sanctissimi Servatoris nativitatem [...]. Hebreai sanctam vocant non

people to them as a chosen people that was rescued from the yoke of slavery, led through a hostile wilderness to the promised land under the guidance of God, eternally present in the column of cloud and fire,¹⁹⁹ who provided for it sustenance and established a covenant with it, sealed through divinely instituted sacrifices and laws.²⁰⁰

As he put his real thoughts on paper, however, we might imagine an aging scholar who no longer believed what he publicly preached to his own students at the *Gymnasium*. Still, whenever he was teaching about Iken's *Antiquitates Hebraicae*, he had to tell his students that John Toland's (1670–1722) attempt,²⁰¹ for example, to explain the column of cloud and fire as a “flame, in a small pot that was suspended from a stick and placed at the head of the line” during the Exodus did not account for “the fire that often rushed down during the daytime to consume sacrifices or to destroy the wicked.”²⁰² Secretly, however, Reimarus could not agree more with Toland. According to Reimarus, the free-thinker Toland had so far provided the most convincing and learned explanation, particularly due to his excellent knowledge of antiquities.²⁰³ It was,

solum in relatione ad terras gentium, sed etiam terram trans Jordanem, habitatam a tribu Ruben, Gad, et dimidia Manassis, minus sanctam declarant terra [sic] cus Jordanem.”

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 15: “Columna nubis & ignis una tantum columna est [...] unde Deus habitans in obscuro vocatur. Noctu vero ignis, nube contentus, magis se prodebat& lucebat. Ex hac ipsa columnā ignis saepe provolavit interdiu ad consumenda sacrificia, Lev. 9.24. it. ad conficiendos improbos, Lev. 10.2. Num. 16.20.32. et tunc dicitur ejus profectur מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה [sic], ex loco ubi facies Jehovaeh, h. e. ex tabernaculo, ex sancto sanctorum ubi Deus inter cherubinos propriitorii singulari modo in columnā praesens erat [...].”

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 91: “Sacrificia Divinae institutionis esse, merito sub initium inculcat autor, dum secundum voluntatem Dei oblationes consumendas fuisse, tradit.”

²⁰¹ John Toland, *Tetradymus: Containing 1. Hodegus; or the Pillar of Cloud and Fire* [...] (London, 1720); on John Toland, see, for example, Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture* (New York, 2003).

²⁰² See Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conradi Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, 54–55: “Hanc vero columnam nubis et ignis ad naturam prorsus revocare conatus est Jo. Tolandus in τετραδύμῳ. [sic] Londini 1720 in 8. diss. cui titulum fecit Hodegi, probaturus, eam nihil aliud fuisse, quam ignem, in olla, ex pertica suspensa, praelatum exercitui, ut ducem hunc eminus spectantes, sequent, sicut in arenoso illo deserto facere antiquitus consueverint [...]. Sed quicquid huius sit, ex artificio certe naturali explicari nequit, quod ex hac columnā ignis saepe provolavit interdiu ad consumenda sacrificia [...] vel ad conficiendos improbos [...].”

²⁰³ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 434–35: “Der berüchtigte Toland, welcher alle andere Gegner der Offenbarung an Belesenheit und Scharfsinnigkeit weit übertrifft, hat dieses Geheimniß wohl zu erst aus den Alterthümern in sein natürliches Licht gestellt, und ich wüste nicht, daß ihm mit Bestand geantwortet sey.”

in fact, quite common then, especially among Near Eastern peoples, to make use of fire for navigational purposes,²⁰⁴ because, as Toland had pointed out, “the Cloud of its Smoke is seen very far by day, as the Light of its Flame [see quote in note] is no less conspicuous by night.”²⁰⁵ To his own public objection against Toland in front of his students, the secret Reimarus counters with a convincing rebuttal. When Scripture stated that Aaron’s sons were consumed by the fire “from the presence of the Lord,”²⁰⁶ it was evidence for the secular nature of the fire and the craftiness of the ancient Jewish priesthood, which was “making use of it for sacrifices to fool the superstitious mob.”²⁰⁷ Such tricks included, according to Reimarus, the lighting of a fire or offering without any flame and were quite common in the ancient world,²⁰⁸ as the French polyhistor Samuel Bochart (1599–1667)²⁰⁹ had illustrated with a plethora of

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- ²⁰⁴ Ibid., 431: “Die Morgenländer konnten auf ihren Heerzügen und Caravanen, in der Wüste, wo kein augenscheinliches Merkzeichen der Wege sind [...] kein besseres Zeichen der gemeinschaftlichen Aufbruchs, Weges und Lagerortes haben, als daß einer, welcher die Gegend kannte [...] mit einer brennenden Materie voranging. Die machte bey Tage einen aufsteigenden Rauch, und leuchtete des Nachts.”
- ²⁰⁵ Toland, *Tetradymus*, 7: “But in vast and unpractis’d desarts, without any edifices at all, without noted hills, frequent rivers [...] there is a necessity of a visible Guide preceeding the main body [...]. Now, there’s no mute sign in the world alone can perform this at all times, but FIRE alone; since the Cloud of its Smoke is (as every body knows) seen very far by day, as the Light of its Flame is no less conspicuous by night.”
- ²⁰⁶ Lev. 10:1–2: “Now Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered unholy fire before the Lord, such as he had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.”
- ²⁰⁷ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 437–38: “Aber, sprichstu, es fuhr doch auch wirklich Feuer aus dieser Wolken-Seule, das die Opfer auf dem Altar anzündete, und die Priester selbst, den Nadab und Abihu, verzehrte? Ja; eben dieses giebt einen neuen Beweis, daß es ein natürliches Feuer gewesen, welches die Kunst der Priester, bey den Opfern, zum Betrug des abergläubischen Pöbels anzuwenden pflegten, hier aber die Priester selbst durch unvorsichtige Handhabung betrog.”
- ²⁰⁸ Ibid., vol. 1, 384–85: “Das erste, die göttliche Zündung der Opfer ohne gemeinses Feuer ist an sich nichts anders, als was auch bey manchen heydniſchen Völkern von ihren Priestern und Magis ausgerichtet ist, um das Volk glauben zu machen, die Götter hätten das Opfer, und die Ursache warum es geschahe, ausserordentlich genehmigt. Den Beweis davon hat uns die gründliche Gelehrsamkeit des Bochart leicht gemacht, welcher dergleichen sonderbare Zündung der Opfer mit vielen unleugbaren Beyspielen erläutert.”
- ²⁰⁹ On Bochart, see Zur Shalev, *Sacred Words and World*, 141–203; April Shelford, “Amitié et animosité dans la République des Lettres: La Querelle entre Bochart et Huet,” in *Pierre Daniel Huet (1630–1721)*, ed. Suzanne Guellouz (Paris, 1994), 99–108.

examples.²¹⁰ Showing his debt to Spencer, Reimarus suggests that Moses had probably been trained in these types of tricks and crafts by Egyptian magi and priests and used them to intimidate and impress the Jewish people.²¹¹ Such spectacles, however, were essential for ancient Jewish priests to establish and maintain a position of power and authority and to fool the common people into paying their dues to them.²¹² Under the pretext of a theocracy,²¹³ the priests were in fact the actual puppet masters of the state.²¹⁴ It thus seems only symptomatic that the priesthood received the lion's share of the sacrificial meat:

But Moses, or more correctly Aaron, had introduced three additional kinds of sacrifices, namely purification offering, trespass offering, and peace offering, from which the priests received either all of the meat or portions of it as their dues. It is then a different kind of Prometheus here, who wrestles the meat from Jupiter's hands and leaves him just with the bones.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ Samuel Bochart, *Hierozoicon sive bipertitum opus de animalibus S. Scripturae* (Frankfurt, 1675), 363–64: “Sed, ut ad ingnem e coelo delapsum, & a Sacerdotibus per multa saecula servatum redeamus, nota Diabolum, hac etiam in parte Dei aemulum, suos habuisse Sacerdotes, qui ignem servarent inexinctum [...]. Persarum quoque Pyrea nota, in quibus aeternum ignem non servebant solum, sed & pro Deo colebant, ut multis docet Brissonius libro secundo *De regno Persarum*. Ηὐρθεῖα vocat Strabo libro decimo quinto, & in *Cappadocia* quoque describit [...].”

²¹¹ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 387: “Moses hatte eben die Feuerwerks-Künste von den Weisen der Egypfer gelernt, und brauchte sie zur Einführung seiner göttlichen Regiments-Form.”

²¹² Ibid., 395: “Was nun die Einkünfte der Familie Arons und des Stammes Levi betrifft: so muß man bey deren Aufzehlung und Berechtigung erstauen, wie weit und unbedacht-sam sie über alle Maaß und Schranken getrieben sind.”

²¹³ During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was an extensive body of scholarship on the *theocratia Judaica*. See, for example, Spencer’s “Dissertatio de theocratia Judaica,” in his *De legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus*, 174–205; Witsius, “Oratio panegyrica de theocratia Israelitarum,” in his *Miscellaneorum sacrorum*, vol. 2, 920–36.

²¹⁴ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 391–92: “Denn Gott selbst saß in dieser Theocratie hinter dem Vorhang, und äusserte nimmer unmittelbar eine solche gegenwärtige Macht oder Verwaltung öffentlicher Sachen. Der Hohepriester konnte etwa wohl Gott fragen, wenn es verlangt ward, und eine göttliche Antwort bringen, wenn sie darnach thun wollten.”

²¹⁵ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 405: “Aber Moses, oder vielmehr Aron, hatte noch dreyerley andere Opfer, nämlich Sünd-Schuld-und Dankopfer, eingeführt, wovon die Priester das Fleisch, entweder gantz, oder doch einige Stücke davon, als ihr Gebühr, bekommen soll-ten. Also war hier ein anderer Prometheus zu Werke, der dem Jupiter das Fleisch ent-wandte, und die bloßen Knochen ließ.”

Reimarus's critical portrayal of the priesthood confirms that we were not mistaken to note the subliminally critical tone in his Iken lecture, when he raised an objection to Witsius's argument about the selfless act of the priest of "ingesting the sin and the transgression of the people."²¹⁶

Equally revealing, however, is Reimarus's reaction to given quantities and measures in the Bible. Reimarus had been slightly evasive in his Iken lecture about solving the problem of the circumference of the molten sea and had struck a somewhat critical tone about the supposed capacity of the vessel.²¹⁷ Unfortunately, Reimarus does not discuss the dimensions of the molten sea in his radical work, but if we turn to his treatment of the quails that, according to Scripture, fed the Israelites on their way through the wilderness, we are offered an insight on ancient measurements.²¹⁸ Scholars such as Iken had estimated that one *chomer* or *corus* equaled 100 *omer* or 4320 *ova*.²¹⁹ Reimarus calculates that since 600,000 men left Egypt, they would collect approximately 25,920 million quails:

If we now estimated the total number of Israelites to approximately 3 million people and about 90 million meals per month, everybody received 288 quails to eat per day; or, since we cannot estimate the same rations for children, each adult had to eat approximately 400 quails per day [...]. But maybe, to preserve them, they salted them, as it was customary in Egypt? But how did they get such huge loads of salt? Maybe they fried them—but how did they get such large amounts of oil or butter in the wilderness?²²⁰

²¹⁶ See notes 192 and 193.

²¹⁷ See note 185.

²¹⁸ Num. 11:31–32: “Then the wind went out from the Lord, and it brought quails from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day’s journey on this side and a day’s journey on the other side, all around the camp, about two cubits deep on the ground. So the people worked all that day and night and all the next day, gathering the quails; the least anyone gathered was ten homers [...]”

²¹⁹ Iken, *Antiquitates Hebraicae*, 448–51: “**עָמֶר** Omer (probe distinguendum a **חָמֵר** Chomer) est decima pars Ephae unde & **עַשְׂרִין** Ushrin dicitur Exod. xvi. 36. capit autem ova 43 $\frac{1}{3}$ [...]. **כָּנֶר** Corus denique, Ezr. vii. 22. qui & **חָוָמֵר** Chomer dicitur Exod. i. c.x Ephas, seu xxx Sata, aut MMMMCCCXX ova complectitur.”

²²⁰ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 340: “Setzen wir nun bey den Israeliten 3 Millionen Seelen [...] so bekäme ein jeglicher auf den Tag 288 Wachteln zu verzehren; oder wo auf die Kinder keine so starke Portion zu rechnen wäre, so müsten die Erwachsenen wohl 400 Wachteln in einem Tage zu sich nehmen [...]. Sollten sie aber eingesalzen werden, wie man in

We can only speculate how Reimarus would have solved the puzzle of the dimensions of the molten sea. Most likely he would not have disagreed with Spinoza's judgment about the skill of the architect. His skeptical undertone in the Iken lecture about the supposed capacity of the vessel, however, is nothing compared to how harshly he evaluated the mathematical implications of the biblical account of the Exodus.

It is hard not to recognize Reimarus's sarcastic and mocking tone in his *Apologie*, especially when contrasted with his lecture notes from earlier teaching days. But sarcasm notwithstanding, Reimarus's ironic tone cannot mask how embedded his criticism is in the world and study of Jewish antiquities. Whether ancient measurements, ancient sacrificial practices, or the edifices and artifacts of the Solomonic temple, each topic had produced a massive body of scholarship, which Reimarus digested in his radical work. In a way, Fabricius and Wolf, the two master bibliographers and compilers, prepared Reimarus well for these exercises in the *Apologie*. How they might have frowned! But given Reimarus's position both at the *Gymnasium* and in the *Respublica literaria*, it was probably wise for him to keep this part of his lessons in the drawer.

Egypten that: woher so viele Lasten Saltz? oder sollten sie gar eingebraten werden: woher so viele Tonnen Oels oder Butter, beides in der Wüste?"

Jean Le Clerc's Faithful Pupil

Reimarus Encounters the Profane

A Seminal Encounter?

In 1720, during his *peregrinatio academica* through Holland and on his way to Oxford, the twenty-six-year-old Reimarus made the acquaintance of the famous Arminian theologian Jean Le Clerc (1657–1736),¹ who was living under self-imposed exile in Amsterdam. Aside from having instructed Reimarus to look at various manuscripts in Dutch libraries, Reimarus's mentor, the Hebraist Johann Christoph Wolf, may in fact have suggested this visit to Reimarus. Wolf himself had met Le Clerc on his own *voyage littéraire* about twelve years earlier and had been greatly impressed by the learned man's keenness and elegance.² By the time Reimarus met him, Le Clerc was one of the most renowned, albeit quarrelsome, men of letters in Europe.³

The scholarly community had started to take notice of Le Clerc after the initially anonymous publication of his *Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1685), which, in the form of twenty letters, constituted a rebuttal of Richard Simon's *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, published earlier in the same year.⁴ Then followed countless

1 See Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky (SUB HH), *Reimarus Nachlaß* III b 4, "Tagebuch Notizen aus Holland"; on Jean Le Clerc in general, see Annie Barnes, *Jean Le Clerc (1657–1736) et la République des Lettres* (Paris, 1938); Samuel Golden, *Jean Le Clerc* (New York, 1972); Jacques Le Brun, "Jean Le Clerc," in *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts (Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie)*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Basel, 1993), 1018–24; Maria Cristina Pitassi, *Entre croire et savoir: le problème de la méthode chez Jean Le Clerc* (Leiden, 1987); more specifically, Henning Graf Reventlow, "Bibelexegese als Aufklärung. Die Bibel im Denken des Johannes Clericus (1657–1736)," in Henning Graf Reventlow et al., *Historische Kritik und biblischer Kanon in der deutschen Aufklärung* (Wiesbaden, 1988), 1–19.

2 See Martin Mulsow, "From Antiquarianism to Bible Criticism? Young Reimarus Visits the Netherlands," in *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Martin Mulsow (New York, 2011), 1–40.

3 Symptomatically, Le Clerc wrote a little treatise in his *Parrhasiana* with the title "Reflexions sur les disputes des gens de lettres & particulièrement des théologiens." See *Parrhasiana ou Pensées diverses [...]*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1701), 1–54.

4 Though *Sentimens* was written anonymously, it did not take long until Le Clerc was identified as the author and it became a personal clash between Simon and Le Clerc; see Golden, *Jean*

treatises and books on philology, commentaries and translations of the Old and New Testaments, as well as his *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (1686), which soon established itself as one of the most respected review journals of its time. But early in his career, Le Clerc had fallen into disrepute among orthodox theologians.⁵ These suspicions were not entirely unfounded, since Le Clerc, though not publicly, seemed at least in part to embrace some of Spinoza's critical views on the Pentateuch.⁶ Merely being mentioned alongside "that evil man Spinoza" was enough to be suspected of heresy or atheism.⁷ Notwithstanding these views, Le Clerc had always been an active member of the *Respublica literaria*. Among the illustrious circle of Le Clerc's correspondents was Johann Albert Fabricius, Reimarus's future father-in law, whose *Bibliotheca latina* and

Le Clerc, 32. On Simon, see Auguste Bernus, *Richard Simon et son histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Lausanne, 1869; reprint, Geneva, 1969); also Sascha Müller, *Richard Simon (1638–1712): Exeget, Theologe, Philosoph und Historiker* (Bamberg, 2005), which appears to be an offshoot of his more extensive dissertation *Kritik und Theologie: Christliche Glaubens- und Schrifthermeneutik nach Richard Simon (1638–1712)* (St. Ottilien, 2004).

- 5 Even Pierre Bayle, himself not particularly afraid of confronting religious orthodoxy, voiced his concerns about some of Le Clerc's views. In a letter to the Calvinist minister Jacques Lenfant (1661–1728), Bayle writes: "Mr. Le Clerc vient de faire un Livre contre Mr. Simon. Il y a de bonnes choses mais trop hardies [...]; quoted in Maria Cristina Pitassi, *Entre croire et savoir: le problème de la méthode critique chez Jean Le Clerc* (Leiden, 1987), 19.
- 6 To his friend Philipp van Limborch Le Clerc wrote in 1681: "Non dubito te legisse Tractatum Theologico-Politicum, qui liber per Gallias multos Pontificios non modo a sua Religione sed etiam a Christiana alienos fecit, inter nostros autem si nondum ita grassatus est, haud minorem forte morbum pariet nisi solide refutetur. Puto etiam in Belgio vestro multos esse qui satis caute librum illum non legerint, et cum iis quae in eo vera sunt mala simul amplexi sint, scis enim in eo πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ κευτυμένα, πολλὰ δὲ λυγρά. Vellem itaque ut quicquid inest veneni solide refelleretur quod hactenus, nisi fallor, a nemine praestitum est. Certe quod dicit de auctore Pentateuchi, et alia eiusmodi quae ad Historiam et Criticen pertinent pleraque non modo sunt vera, sed et clara iis qui rem sine praeconceptis opinionibus expenderunt: imo etiam necessaria ad multorum Scripturae locorum intelligentiam [...]." See Jean Le Clerc, *Eistolario*, vol. I: 1679–1689, ed. Mario Sina (Florence, 1987), 31.
- 7 The anonymous reviewer of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* in the *Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten und Neuen Theologischen Sachen*, for example, writes: "Es gibt kein Zweifel/ daß der böse Spinoza dieses Buch/ die Religion zu ruiniren/ geschrieben hat/ welchen Zweck er unter dem Nahmen der Libertatis philosophandi vorstellet. Er hat gesucht in iedweden Capiteln dieses Buchs eine derer Hindernüße hinweg zu nehmen/ welche seiner Atheistischen Meinung entgegen stunden/ und die Religion stützen [...]; see *Unschuldige Nachrichten* (Leipzig, 1708), 870; for a more comprehensive analysis of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* and its impact, see Steven Nadler, *A Book Forged in Hell: Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age* (Princeton, 2011).

Bibliotheca graeca the often overly critical Le Clerc much valued.⁸ Reimarus's association with Fabricius was certainly helpful in this particular case. As Anne Goldgar has pointed out, joining "the Republic of Letters required contacts [...] and essentially *meant* having contacts," and Le Clerc had the reputation of being somewhat eccentric.⁹ He would often receive visitors, if at all, only after numerous unsuccessful attempts and, even worse, sometimes make them wait before graciously granting them an "audience."¹⁰ So a letter of introduction from the famous humanist from Hamburg certainly helped.

We do not know much about this meeting. What usually transpired was that the famous scholar would spend some time discussing various subjects of common interest with his visitors before leading them to his library where he would grant them a peek at some of his treasures.¹¹ Reimarus's visit seems to have been no different, as he himself recalled. Le Clerc may have been very open with the young man about some of his views on recently published scholarship and the art of criticism, which led Reimarus to conclude:

[Le Clerc] judges and criticizes all people very freely. To me, it seemed a little bit profane when he claimed that he evaluates the Bible just as if he read Aristophanes. He is currently working on a commentary on the

⁸ See letter Le Clerc to Fabricius, 23 November 1706: "Attamen re melius pensitata, visum est occasione oblata uti, qua tibi, Vir Clarissime, significarem te et tua a me magni fieri; quemadmodum facile cognoscere potuisti; ex *Bibliotheca Selecta*, ubi de tua *Bibliotheca Latina*, et *Apocryphis N.r.* loquutus sum, si forte ejusmodi libellos Gallicos legis. Vidi etiam *Bibliothecam Graecam*, de qua jam egissem [...]; in Jean Le Clerc, *Epistolario*, vol. III: 1706–1718, ed. Maria Grazia and Mario Sina (Florence, 1994), 46–47.

⁹ Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995), 219.

¹⁰ See, for example, the account described by Gottlieb Stolle, in Martin Mulsow's "Eine Reise durch die Gelehrtenrepublik. Soziales Wissen in Gottlieb Stolle's Journal der Jahre 1703–1704," in *Kultur der Kommunikation: Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter von Leibniz und Lessing*, ed. Ulrich J. Schneider (Wiesbaden, 2005), 191.

¹¹ See, for example, the account by Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach of his visit to Fabricius in Hamburg: Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen Holland und Engelland, Zweyter Theil* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1753), 86–87; also Charles-Etienne Jordan, *Histoire d'un voyage littéraire, fait en MDCC.XXXIII. en France, en Angleterre, et en Hollande* (The Hague, 1735). For a scholarly treatment of the *voyage littéraire*, see Françoise Waquet et al., eds., *Johannes Fredericus Gronovius: Pèlerin de la République des Lettres: recherches sur le voyage savant au XVII^e siècle* (Geneva, 1984), as well as Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 219–26.

prophets and on the Book of Job. He owns a neat manuscript in folio of the epistles by Libanius [...].¹²

Le Clerc's elaborations evidently did not sit well with Reimarus. But exactly what does Reimarus mean by "profane"?

"Profanities"

In pursuit of the root causes of Reimarus's notable discomfort, we are led back at least two hundred years before the remarkable encounter between these two scholars. This forces us now to abandon the perplexed Reimarus for a while in Le Clerc's study with the promise, however, to return before the end of the chapter.

The philological program of Renaissance humanism, reinforced by the printing revolution, had resulted not only in a blossoming of profane classical scholarship, but also in a surge of biblical scholarship. Starting with the Soncino edition of the Hebrew Old Testament in 1488, numerous printed editions of the Hebrew text appeared during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,¹³ culminating in Brian Walton's London Polyglot in 1657.¹⁴ But the sharpened skills in classical languages paired with the visual representation of various versions in parallel columns in the polyglots also revealed that the divinely inspired document existed in several different forms.¹⁵ During the

¹² See SUB HH, *Reimarus Nachlaß* III b 4, "Tagebuch Notizen aus Holland." Printed as "Reimarus, Travel Diary Fragment, 1720/21," in *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Martin Mulsow (New York, 2011), 22–38. For the passage quoted above, see "Travel Diary Fragment," 22: "[...] [Le Clerc] judiciert und critisiert sehr frei [? fein?] über alle leute. Es schiene mir ein wenig profan, das er sagte, er critisirte die bibel nicht anders, als ob er den Aristophanes vor sich hatte. Er schreibt jetzo e[inen] commentar über die Propheten und den Hiob. Hat ein hübsch manuscript von des Libanii epistolis in fol. [...]."

¹³ For a detailed decription of various editions, see Jacques Le Long, *Bibliotheca sacra seu syllabus omnium ferme Sacrae Scripturae editionum ac versionum [...]* (Leipzig, 1709), 2 vols.

¹⁴ See Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica* (Grand Rapids, 1995), 39–44.

¹⁵ See on this topic the splendid essay by Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: Rise, Decline, Rebirth," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102, no. 3 (1983), 365–99, especially 369–70; also Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, "Foundations of Biblical Philology in the Seventeenth Century: Christian and Jewish Dimensions," in

Middle Ages, Christian Hebraists leveled charges against Jews for having intentionally corrupted the Hebrew text in order to conceal references to Jesus as the Messiah. This charge already served as a convenient weapon to explain deviations of quotes by the New Testament writers from the text of the Old Testament or the later addition of the vowel points.¹⁶ Efforts to arrive at a correct version of the revealed text can be traced as far back as the early twelfth century,¹⁷ but the issue of textual accuracy received a new dynamic through the reformers' claim of *Hebraica veritas*.

Whereas the Catholic Church never had a problem conceding textual deficiencies of the Vulgate with its appeal to papal authority and *traditio*, the reformers' adoption of the *ad fontes* cry of humanists coupled with Luther's *Scriptura sui ipsius interpres* not only assumed the superiority of the Hebrew text over the Vulgate, but also stressed its integrity as the *verbum Dei*.¹⁸ Yet, the

Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century, ed. Isadore Twersky et al. (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 77–94; Peter Miller, “The ‘Antiquarianization’ of Biblical Scholarship and the London Polyglot Bible (1653–57),” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 3 (2001), 466. Origen's *Hexapla* was probably the most famous predecessor as well as the model for these gigantic polyglot versions. On these ancient models, see Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006). On early modern polyglot projects, see Adrian Schenker, “The Polyglot Bibles of Antwerp, Paris and London: 1568–1658,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Sæbø, vol. 2 (Göttingen, 2008), 774–84.

¹⁶ These charges had been leveled since the time of Justin Martyr. See, for example, *Iustini Martyris dialogus cum Tryphone*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich (New York, 1997), 71.2: “Καὶ ὅτι πολλὰς γραφὰς τέλεον περιεῖλον ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξηγήσεων τῶν γεγενημένων ύπὸ τῶν παρὰ Πτολεμαίων γεγενημένων πρεσβυτέρων, ἐξ ὧν διαρρήδην οὐτός ὁ σταυρωθεῖς (ἐστὶ καὶ) θεός καὶ ἀνθρώπος καὶ σταυρούμενος καὶ ἀποθνήσκων κεκηρυγμένος ἀποδείκνυται, εἰδέναι ὑμᾶς βούλομαι [...]”; also Augustine in his *De civitate dei*, 15.11: “[...] Iudeos vero, dum nobis invident, quod lex et prophetae ad nos interpretando transierint, mutasse quaedam in codicibus suis, ut nostris minueretur auctoritas. Hanc opinionem vel suspicionem accipiat quisque ut putaverit [...]”; Eugene F. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1985), 173–75; also Günter Stemberger, “Elements of Biblical Interpretation in Medieval Jewish-Christian Disputation,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Sæbø, vol. 1, t. 2 (Göttingen, 2000), 580–81.

¹⁷ Michael A. Signer, “Polemics and Exegesis: The Varieties of Twelfth-Century Hebraism,” in *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraism and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison P. Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulson (Philadelphia, 2004), 23–24.

¹⁸ Arjo Vanderjagt, “*Ad fontes!* The Early Humanist Concern for the *Hebraica veritas*,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Sæbø, vol. 2, 154–89.

sola Scriptura principle was in need of a reliable text, and deviations in punctuation and accentuation, numerous textual variants, and even translations undermined the concept of the *textus receptus*.¹⁹ But the full force of this problem came to the foreground only with confessional tensions rising. So when the Hebraist Elias Levita (1469–1549)²⁰ published his *Massoreth ha-Massoreth* in Venice in 1538,²¹ providing ample evidence that the Masoretic vowel points were a later, post-Talmudic invention,²² many Protestant Reformers, including Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Beza, seemed hardly alarmed by what Luther termed a “Menschenfundlein” [human invention] of the rabbis.²³ But once Catholic polemicists started using Levita’s findings increasingly to torpedo the Protestants’ claim of the superiority of the Hebrew text, reformers such as Matthias Flacius Illyricus²⁴ realized how high the stakes were and countered by insisting that “all authors of the sacred writings wrote in an un mutilated and clear fashion not only with consonants, but vowels as well.” And to convince his readers of the grave and severe nature of this issue, Flacius added that “all those who feel differently not only believe what is wrong, but what is destructive to faith and church, which are established only by the certainty of

¹⁹ I am aware of the somewhat anachronistic use of the term *textus receptus* here. For the concept of a Hebrew *textus receptus*, see Goshen-Gottstein, “Foundations,” 82–83.

²⁰ On Elias Levita, see Gérard E. Weil, *Élie Lévita: humaniste et Massorète (1469–1549)* (Leiden, 1963); see also the insightful comments by Johann Christoph Wolf in his *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, vol. 1 (Hamburg, 1715), 153–61, especially 156–57.

²¹ Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita* (London, 1867).

²² Levita was not the first scholar to make this observation. Starting with Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1164), some Jewish scholars had already opted for a post-Talmudic origin of the vowel points. Some Christian scholars, such as the thirteenth-century Spanish Dominican Raymond Martini, adopted this view: “[...] Moses vero doctor noster (felicis memoriae) qui scripsit legem sine punctis vocalibus, super iis etiam dictionibus, quae dubiae lectionis esse possunt [...].” See Ramond Martini, *Pugio Fidei* (....), 218; also Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, vol. 2 (Hamburg, 1721), 460–544.

²³ Quoted in Ludwig Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche* (Jena, 1869), 253; also Richard A. Muller, “The Debate over the Vowel Points and the Crisis in Orthodox Hermeneutics,” in Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (New York, 2003), 147.

²⁴ On Flacius, see, for example, Josip Matesić, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus: Leben und Werk* (Munich, 1993); also Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit* (Erlangen, 1859–61); Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden, 2002); on Flacius’s hermeneutics, see Bernt T. Oftestad, “Further Development of Reformation Hermeneutics,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Saebø, vol. 2, 604–11.

God's word.”²⁵ Flacius's words seem almost visionary with regard to the battles ahead.

In 1632, Jean Morin (1591–1659)²⁶ published the Samaritan Pentateuch, recently discovered by the Italian traveler Pietro della Valle (1586–1652),²⁷ in the Paris Polyglot Bible.²⁸ It revealed numerous divergences from the Hebrew text, and many of its passages were in fact closer to the Septuagint and the Vulgate. These findings prompted Morin, a Calvinist who had recently converted to Catholicism, to embark on an in-depth comparison of the Greek, Hebrew, and Latin versions of Scripture.²⁹ Part of this analysis involved a comparison of the Septuagint and the references of New Testament authors with the Hebrew text. This investigation led Morin to recognize three types of divergences: the first encompasses those differences that, as Morin suggests, must have resulted from the mispronunciation of a Hebrew passage or from the misplacement of a vowel due to improper pronunciation in the course of textual transmission;

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- 25 Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Clavis Scripturae seu de sermone sacrarum literarum, plurimas generales regulas continentis, altera pars* (Basel, 1567). I am using the Leipzig edition from 1695. See *ibid.*, pars 2, 643: “Mea est igitur sententia: Vocales seu (ut vocant) puncta, una cum consonantibus iam olim (fortasse adhuc ab ipsomet Adamo) inventa; omnesque sacrarum Literarum scriptores integre dilucidoque scripsisse, non solum consonantibus, sed & vocalibus: eosque, qui contraria sentiunt, non solum falsa sentire; sed & conscientiis, Ecclesiaeque, quae tantum certitudine verbi Dei aedificatur, perniciosa.” Herbert Jaumann has pointed out that the Lutheran doctrine of θεοπνευστία ultimately led to an exclusion of philology from exegesis and consequently to a resacralization of Scripture. See Herbert Jaumann, *Critica: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Literaturkritik zwischen Quintilian und Thomasius* (New York, 1995), 145.
- 26 Paul Auvray, “Jean Morin (1591–1659),” in *Revue Biblique* 66 (1959), 397–414; Pierre Gibert, “The Catholic Counterpart and Response to the Protestant Orthodoxy,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Saebø, vol. 2, 767–73.
- 27 On Pietro della Valle, see Peter G. Bietenholz, *Pietro della Valle, 1586–1652: Studien zur Geschichte der Orientkenntnis und des Orientbildes im Abendlande* (Basel, 1962); His principle work, the *Viaggi [...] divisi in tre parti, cioè La Turchia, La Persia e l'India, le quali hauran per Aggiunta che conterrà le fifice di molte cose memorabilia, sparse per tutta l'Opera, e la loro esplicatione* (Rome, 1650–1663), underwent publication in several editions and was translated into several languages.
- 28 See Peter Miller's excellent treatment of this episode, “A Philologist, a Traveller and an Antiquary Rediscover the Samaritans in Seventeenth-century Paris, Rome and Aix: Jean Morin, Pietro della Valle and N.-C. Fabri de Peiresc,” in *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Helmut Zedelmaier and Martin Mulsow (Tübingen, 2001), 123–46.
- 29 Jean Morin, *Diatribe elenctica de sinceritate Hebraei Graecique textus dignoscenda, adversus insanas quorundam Haereticorum calumnias [...]* (Paris, 1639), 353: “Exercitationis scopus est unicus demonstrare codicem meum eundem esse quem Patres citaverunt. Id duobus argumentis demonstro, Prius ab iis locis quos Patres citaverunt e Pentateucho Samaritano qui differunt a Iudaico [...].”

the second type concerns those that result from the alteration of one or several individual letters; the third category includes all those differences that can no longer be tied to one particular morphological or vowel change because the respective Hebrew passages in the Septuagint and in the Greek New Testament have been completely altered.³⁰

Morin adduces a myriad of examples for each case. In one particular instance, Morin points to a passage in Ezekiel 27:32, where the Septuagint reads καὶ λύμψονται οἱ νῖοι αὐτῶν ἐπὶ σὲ θρῆνον [their sons will take up a lament over you], whereas the Hebrew Bible reads וְנִשְׁאַו אֶלְךָ בְּנֵיכֶם קִנְחָה [and they will raise over you a lament with their mourning]. Morin suggests that the key word responsible for this divergence was the Hebrew phrase בְּנֵיכֶם [with their mourning], which is a compound form of the particle בְּ [in, with], the singular form of the noun נֵי [wailing], and the nominal suffixed pronoun כֶם- [their]. The Greek phrase οἱ νῖοι αὐτῶν is a translation of the Hebrew בְּנֵיכֶם [their sons], which is a compound of בְּנֵי, the construct form of the plural noun בְּנִים [sons], and again the nominal suffixed pronoun כֶם- [their]. This example illustrates how the replacement of a *hireq* [...] by a *sere* [...] can drastically alter the role of the initial בְּ, determining whether it is actually part of the root noun or not, which inevitably changes the meaning of the entire passage.³¹ Such findings prompted Morin to mock the Protestants' claim of *Hebraica veritas*:

By what evidence of transmission do [the Protestants] so audaciously assert that no mistakes crept into the Hebrew codices? They have not consulted ancient codices, they have hardly by any chance seen one or the other manuscript [...]. Among the Jews, no ancient codices older than five hundred years have been found, nor do the Jews, who in our century have devoted themselves to preserving their books, mention any older ones [...].³²

³⁰ Ibid., 27–28: “[...] discriminis textus Graeci ab Hebraeo causas inquirimus. Omnes autem ad tria genera revocari poterunt. Primum ampectitur eas differentias quae nulla textus variatione, sed sola lectione sive punctorum diversa inscriptione conciliantur. Secundum ea quorum differentiam probabile est ab unius literulae in textu Hebraeo mutatione aut permutatione ortam esse, cum restituta aut traiecta illa facile textus Hebreus cum Graeco in gratiam redeat. Postremum genus, ea quae Hebrei textus necessariam corruptelam demonstrare videntur.”

³¹ Ibid., 29: “Sic Ezechielis 27.32. 70. & *assument filiis eorum*. Hebrei nunc, & *assument* in lamentationibus. Ratio haec est, in dictione בְּנֵיכֶם, 70. existimarent beth esse radicalem, Iudei nunc esse propositionem.”

³² Jean Morin, *מסורת הברית Exercitationes Biblicae de Hebrei Graecique textus sinceritate* [...] (Paris, 1633), 4: In Hebreos codices nullas mendas irrepsisse quo argumento freti tam audacter affirmant? Nulos illi codices antiquos contulerunt, vix forte unum

According to Morin, “Nobody doubts that the very same books, which the Prophets themselves and the Apostles cultivated, were most pure and that every version should be completed in accordance with them,”³³ but “as the various and numerous catalogues of rabbinic books and observations testify,” many corruptions slipped into the Hebrew text after the time of the Masoretes.³⁴ Morin’s polemic encountered serious criticism, especially from Protestants such as the younger Buxtorf (Johannes II, 1599–1664) or the Swiss theologian Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620–1667),³⁵ who not only disagreed with Morin’s assessment of the age of available codices,³⁶ but, by stressing the stupendous diligence of the Masoretes, asserted the integrity and superiority of the Hebrew text.³⁷

Protestants, however, were in a precarious position. On the one hand, textual obscurities could not simply be dismissed, but then again, admitting that the vowel points were added later would mark them as a human invention that could randomly be modified. “What then,” as the elder Buxtorf (Johannes I, 1564–1629) had prophetically asked years before, “would happen to the stability of the text, what certainty would there be at all?”³⁸ But in a climate of already

aut alterum manuscriptum viderunt [...]. Apud Iudeos, codices manuscripti annis quingentis vetustiores non reperiuntur, nec vetustiores referunt Iudei qui nostro saeculo restituendis libris suis operam navaverunt.”

- 33 Ibid., 30: “Quis unquam hoc in dubium revocavit? Libros ipsissimos quos ipsi Prophetae & Apostoli exaraverunt, esse sincerissimos, ad ipsorum amussim versiones quascunque esse exigendas nemo ambigit.”
- 34 Ibid., 5: “Post Masoretharum castigationes, varias iterum corruptelas in Iudeorum libros irrepisse: Istarum corruptelarum sicut & illarum quae ante Masorethas irrepserant, varii & numerosi catalogi ex Rabbinorum libris & animadversionibus textuntur.”
- 35 See, for example, Johann Heinrich Hottinger, *Exercitationes Anti-Morinianae de Pentateucho samaritano eiusque uidentica [...]* (Zurich, 1644); on Hottinger, see Jan Loop, *Johann Heinrich Hottinger: Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2014), especially 91–121.
- 36 Johann Heinrich Hottinger, *Thesaurus Philologicus seu Clavis Scripturae [...]* (Zurich, 1649), 109: “Atque ex prolixo hoc vetustorum Codicum catalogo patet, falsissimum esse, quod Morin ad elevandam autoritatem contextus Hebraei garrit: *Apud Iudeos codices Msc. annis quingentis vetustiores non reperiri; nec vetustiores referre Iudeos, qui nostro seculo restituendis libris suis operam navarunt.*”
- 37 Ibid., 137: “Stupenda Masoretharum diligentia, non tantum circa versus & voces, sed & circa singulas literas, quas, una cum omnibus variationibus punctuationis & scriptionis non modo in numerato habuere, sed & scripto consignavere, ne falsariis manibus vel locus, vel suspicio faltem daretur.”
- 38 Johann Buxtorf, *Johannis Buxtorfi Tiberias, sive commentarius masorethicus quo primum explicatur, quid Masora sit [...]* (Basel, 1620), 3: “Si inventum humanum sunt, et authoritas

heightened tensions in an “age of crisis,”³⁹ little skirmishes were capable of snowballing to seemingly paradoxical results, since scholarship often blurred the lines of friend and foe from a confessional point of view. So after Buxtorf’s fellow Calvinist Louis Cappel had published his *Arcanum punctuationis relatum sive de punctorum vocalium & accentum apud Hebraeos vera & germana antiquitate* (1624),⁴⁰ the most sophisticated study in favor of a later dating of the vowel points, striking thereby the vindictive chord of the younger Buxtorf and unleashing the infamous vowel controversy,⁴¹ he encountered significant problems trying to publish his most stellar work on textual criticism, the *Critica sacra*, which, albeit lacking Morin’s polemical tone, nonetheless took the same stance over the obscurity of the Hebrew text.⁴²

Unlike Morin, however, who was preoccupied pointing out the flaws in the *Hebraica veritas*, Cappel proposed guidelines on when and how a certain passage in the sacred text merited emendation.⁴³ Any changes, however, should

humana, removeri possunt, et sic lectio pro cuiusque erit arbitrio. Quae tunc textus hebreai firmitas, quae certitudo?”; on the elder Buxtorf, see Stephen G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1996), especially 203–39.

39 Hugh-Trevor Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London, 1967), 193–236, especially 229.

40 My choice of words may be slightly misleading here, since Cappel’s friend from Leiden, the eminent Orientalist Thomas Erpenius (1584–1624) published the work without mentioning the author’s name.

41 See Richard A. Muller (see note 23 above) as well as Georg Schnedermann, *Die Controverse des Ludovicus Cappellus mit den Buxtorfen über das Alter der Hebräischen Punctuation* (Ph.D. diss., University of Leipzig, 1878); also Stephen G. Burnett, “Later Christian Hebraists,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Saebø, vol. 2, 789–92.

42 Strong evidence suggests that Morin was ultimately instrumental in getting the work published. See François Laplanche, *L’Écriture, le sacré et l’histoire: érudits et politiques protestants devant la Bible en France au XVII^e siècle* (Amsterdam, 1986), 227–28; see also Lutz Danneberg, “Ezechiel Spanheim’s Dispute with Richard Simon. On the Biblical Philology at the End of the 17th Century,” in *The Berlin Refuge, 1680–1780: Learning and Science in European Context*, ed. Martin Mulsow et al. (Leiden, 2003), 67–68.

43 Louis Cappel, *Critica sacra sive de variis quae in sacris Veteris Testamendi libris occurunt lectionibus libri sex [...]* (Paris, 1650), 424–25: “Primo, coniecturae & correctiones non sunt temere facienda iis in locis in quibus hodiernus textus Graecus N. vel Hebraeus V. Testamenti, cum omnibus vel plerisque antiquorum Patrum, Interpretum & Paraphrastarum codicibus aperte consentit [...]. Deinde, iis in locis in quibus dubium atque incertum esse potest, an hodiernus textus Hebraeus consentiat cum lectione quam secuti sunt LXX. Aut alii antiqui Interpres, vel Paraphrastae [...] non temere tum utendum est coniecturis & correctionibus [...]. Tertio, coniectura seu correctio eiusmodi esse debet ut sensum loci reddat planiorem, apertiores, magis cohaerentem, multo

not be put directly into the text, but noted in the margins instead, just as the Masoretes had indicated differences between the oral (*qere*) and the written (*kethib*) tradition.⁴⁴ Although Cappel pointed out that the Hebrew text needed to be treated with the utmost respect and protected from any profanation, much of his inspiration did come from profane scholarship. Cappel argued that in the process of completing his work, he had come across Henri Estienne's *Castigationes in Marci Tullij Ciceronis locos quamplurimos* (1557), which helped especially in his understanding of the nature and sources of transmission errors.⁴⁵ Reading Estienne made him realize:

it is then not surprising, if, by the same manner and reason, the same means, and from the same causes [...] just as many variants may have slipped into the sacred Greek and Hebrew books of the Old and New Testaments, through the idleness, drowsiness, negligence, and ignorance of the scribes and copyists as well as through the hastiness and audacity of the correctors, just as loathsome errors and monstrosities have crept into every kind of Greek and Latin book [...].⁴⁶

denique commodiorem, & fidei analogiae aliisque Scripturae locis magis conuenientem [...]. Quarto, eiusmodi esse debet, ut planum sit, proclue fuisse Librario a vera & genuina lectione, vel scriptione, in illam quam suspectam credimus & vitii arguimus, quamque emendatam volumus, prolabi [...].”

- 44 Ibid., 425: “[...] correctio seu conjectura non est intra textum coniicienda, neque in antiquae lectionis locum infulcienda atque substituenda, sed in margine aut adversa pagina dumtaxat est annotanda, vel in Comment. & observationibus Scripturam est proponenda, ut liberum sit de ea Lectoris iudicium [...]. Sic olim factum fuit a Massorethis Iudeorum criticis atque censoribus librorum sacrorum, in suo Keri & Cetib; lectionem nempe quam in codice suo invenerunt, sed quam vitiosam existimabant, minimeque usurpandam, non sustulerunt de textu, sed in margine ex adverso eam quam veram & genuinam putarunt lectionem adscripsere.”
- 45 Ibid., 436: “Cum ante annos plus minus duodecim, Criticam hanc ad ubilicum perduxisset, incidi non ita pridem casu Henrici Stephani Libellum, cui titulum fecit, *Castigationes in Marci Tullij Ciceronis locos quamplurimos*, editum ex ipsius officina, anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo quinquagesimo septimo: In cuius calce ea habentur quae hic describere atque contrahere libuit, quia ad argumenti Criticae huius meae illustrationem & confirmationem plurimum faciunt [...].”
- 46 Ibid., 439: “Non est ergo quod iam miretur, si eodem modo & ratione, eadem via, iisdemque de causis, tam multae variae lectiones, in sacros Veteris & Novi Testimenti libros Graecos & Hebraeos, per librariorum sive scribarum desidiam, somnolentiam, incuriam, ignorantiam, aut vero etiam temeritatem & audaciam correctorum irrepserset, cum tot tantaque & tam foeda menda & monstra pariter in omne genus Graecorum & Latinorum librorum irrepserset, ut a docto illo viro videmus observatum esse.”

Cappel's argument that he had applied to the biblical text the same methods that had been utilized by the famous sixteenth-century humanist printer must not have sounded very reassuring to orthodox circles and self-proclaimed guardians of the sanctity of the Hebrew text such as Constantijn L'Empereur (1591–1648)⁴⁷ or Jacob Golius (1596–1667) from Leiden, who had successfully delayed the publication of the *Critica sacra*.⁴⁸ Their fears were certainly not unfounded. It is, in fact, only a small step from mere allusions and parallels to profane classical scholarship to applying the same procedures to the sacred text. Indeed, Cappel's distinction between the revealed text and the Hebrew “textus receptus” not only allowed for a profanation of the *hodiernum textum Hebraeum*,⁴⁹ but also made it imperative for a recovery of the revealed text. If the present text was faulty and unreliable, then it was legitimate to correct it by the same means used to emend any classical text.

Despite Cappel's assurances that the textual criticism would not erode the authority of Scripture, the floodgates had been opened for future incursions and assaults on the doctrine of scriptural inspiration and the Protestant *Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*. Cappel's findings may have had some impact on one who would later be decried in orthodox circles as one of the most notorious profaners of Scripture,⁵⁰ the Dutch man of letters Hugo Grotius. This notoriety is mainly based upon Grotius's *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum* (1644) and his *Annotationes in quatuor Evangelia & Acta Apostolorum* (1641, 1646, 1650), voluminous commentaries on both Old and New Testaments that treated the sacred books, much to the dismay of Protestant orthodoxy, no differently from any other classical text, incorporating terse but often pertinent references to a wide array of classical (pagan) authors. Even a cursory look at these *annotata* reveals that Grotius no longer read Scripture with salvation history in mind. He focused exclusively on the *sensus historicus sive grammaticus* and avoided

47 Peter T. Van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn L'Empereur (1591–1648), Professor of Hebrew and Theology at Leiden* (New York, 1989).

48 Laplanche, *L'Écriture, le sacré et l'histoire*, 227.

49 See Cappel, *Critica sacra*, 439: “Nec Iudeorum hac in parte Massoretharum diligentia & ἀχριβεία hodiernum textum Hebraeum ab omni omnino varia lectione immunem hactenus reddidit, uti planum supra fecimus, tum ex marginali Keri & Cetib, tum ex Orientalium & Occidentalium Iudeorum variis lectionibus, tum ex illis quae deprehendi possunt ex Talmude, Paraphrasibus Chaldaicis, & Rabbinorum Commentariis.”

50 See Abraham Kuennen, “Hugo Grotius als Ausleger des Alten Testaments,” in Abraham Kuennen, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Wissenschaft*, trans. K. Budde (Leipzig, 1894), 175–76.

forcing any theological explanations of obscure passages.⁵¹ Besides noting differences between the Vulgate, the Septuagint, and the Hebrew Bible, Grotius seemed completely absorbed in illustrating the *mores Hebraeorum* by finding appropriate parallels in the ancient world, thereby often arriving at seemingly disconnected results. Even the French Oratorian Richard Simon (1638–1712), equally not what one would call conservative in his approach to the Bible, remarked later that he wished Grotius had not overloaded his comments with references to the ancient poets.⁵²

But how can we account for Grotius's apparent disregard for the boundary between sacred and profane, and what is the connection to Cappel? That Grotius was not a theologian by training,⁵³ together with his strong affinity to antiquity,⁵⁴ may only partially account for this boldness. More relevant is certainly Grotius's provocative devaluation of the doctrine of scriptural inspiration. In his view, it is quite clear that “not all books of the Hebrew Bible were dictated by the Holy Spirit.” Since these are actual historical accounts, it is only important that the writer of each book “was strong in his memory in regard to the things that were observed as well as in his diligence when copying the commentaries of the ancients.”⁵⁵ Obviously, this leaves a wide margin not only for acknowledging textual errors, but also for allowing contemporary pagan accounts into the Bible. As faithful and pious as they may have been, the biblical authors were nonetheless actual people who lived, breathed, and wrote at often-tumultuous times, when numerous civilizations intersected. Cappel's work most certainly contributed to Grotius's liberty of suggesting textual emendations for obscure passages. Although the *Critica sacra* was finally published in 1650, Grotius had mentioned Cappel's work in his commentary on Genesis

⁵¹ H.J.M. Nellen, “Growing Tension between Church Doctrines and Critical Exegesis of the Old Testament,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Saebø, vol. 2, 808–17.

⁵² Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Rotterdam, 1685), 444: “J'aurois seulement souhaité, que selon les règles de la Critique, il [Grotius] n'eût rapporté les témoignages de ces Auteurs profanes, & sur tout des Poëtes, que dans les endroits qui avoient besoin de ces éclaircissements.”

⁵³ I am grateful to Florian Mühlegger for pointing this out to me.

⁵⁴ His appreciation for ancient learning is already evident in Grotius's first theological work, his *Meletius sive de iis quae inter Christianos convenient epistola*, intr., ed., and trans. Posthumus Meyjes (New York, 1988).

⁵⁵ See Grotius, *Votum pro pace ecclesiastica* [1642], in *Hugonis Grotii Opera omnia theologica* (London, 1679), t. 3, 672: “Vere dixi non omnes libros qui sunt in Hebreao Canone, dictatos a Spiritu Sancto. Scriptos esse cum pio animi motu, non nego [...]. Sed a Spiritu Sancto dictari historias nihil fuit opus: satis fuit scriptorem memoria valere circa res spectatas, aut diligentia in describendis Veterum commentariis.”

that had been published six years earlier.⁵⁶ We know now that shortly after its completion in 1635, Cappel had sent his work to Grotius to review and with the request of helping him find a skilled and willing printer. Grotius praised Cappel for having “surpassed others before him,” but warned him not to be disappointed if only few would support his findings.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, clues for Grotius’s lack of reservation in mixing *philologia sacra* and *philologia profana* may also be found in his understanding of the relationship between reason and revelation, which can be traced back to arguments used by early Christian apologists in the face of pressure from Jewish-Hellenistic circles.

History was for Grotius a progressive movement from wisdom toward certainty. Accordingly, this process had already been started by Homer and the poets, whose judgments and claims were tested at the later “court of the philosophers.” After the Jews had added new certainties, which they had received directly from God, supreme truth came with the arrival of Jesus Christ.⁵⁸ This equally legitimizes a selective use of pagan authors who became vehicles of a still more unrefined kind of revelation. A slightly different version of the same argument had already been used during the sixteenth century, mainly by Catholic authors such as Agostino Steuco of Gubbio (1497–1548),⁵⁹ but it may still have played a role in Grotius’s thought.⁶⁰ Thus, God and the angels had endowed Adam with the “perfect theology.” But during the ensuing chaos of the post-Diluvian world, this *prisca sapientia* was corrupted and it disintegrated. Although the Hebrews had been the best post-Diluvian custodians of Edenic theology, other Semitic races—Egyptians, Phoenicians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians—preserved fragments of this philosophy as well. Since the Greeks

⁵⁶ See Grotius’s remarks on Gen. 5:18 in his *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum* [1644], in *Hugonis Grotii Opera Omnia theologica*, t. 1, 8: “[...] De multis discrepantiis quae in hoc & sequentibus capitibus circa numeros annorum apparent in codicibus Hebraeis, Samaritanis, Graecis, nihil melius quod dicam habeo, quam quae dixit in Critico sacro eruditissimus Cappellus.”

⁵⁷ Grotius to Cappel, 13 October 1635, in *Briefwisseling van Hugo Grotius*, ed. B.L. Meulenbroek, vol. 6 (The Hague, 1967), no. 2313, 280–81: “Sicut autem in eo labore alios, qui te praecesserant, ita in Sacra Critice, etiam istum laborem tuum superasti [...]. Neque desperandum tamen, quin, quod in aliis rebus saepe, in hac quoque eveniat, ut paucos eminentes sequantur et illi, qui tantum ad numerum valent.”

⁵⁸ See Posthumus Meyjes, “Introduction,” in Hugo Grotius, *Meletius*, 27.

⁵⁹ Ronald K. Delph, “From Venetian Visitor to Curial Humanist: The Development of Agostino Steuco’s ‘Counter’-Reformation Thought,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 47 (1994), 102–39.

⁶⁰ Ralph Häfner, *Götter im Exil: Frühneuzeitliches Dichtungsverständnis im Spannungsfeld christlicher Apologetik und philologischer Kritik (ca. 1590–1736)* (Tübingen, 2003), 184.

were descendants from these more corrupt cultures, their learning contained minute portions of this perfect theology that had been preserved and passed on to them.⁶¹ There was also evidence that Saint Paul⁶² had read and digested the works of pagan wisdom, possibly even the tragedies of Euripides,⁶³ and therefore that a cautious use of them for exegetical purposes could do no harm. The rule of thumb, however, was that the biblical text was the norm according to which anything else had to be judged. This means that pagan wisdom could only be used illustratively to supplement and to bolster the factual truths of the Bible.

By the early eighteenth century, these developments had created a climate of polemic, uncertainty,⁶⁴ and opposition within theological circles. The findings in philological scholarship had opened a Pandora's box and paved the way for often-unintended subversions of scriptural authority, such as the much-polemized work of Richard Simon.⁶⁵ Especially defiant to these challenges was the reaction among the Lutheran orthodoxy, where the theological faculties of Jena, Wittenberg, and Leipzig decried the work of Grotius and Cappel along with that of Spinoza—or later Richard Simon—often without having to offer plausible alternatives other than reaffirming the authenticity of the Hebrew text as well as the doctrine of verbal inspiration.⁶⁶ As early as

61 Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1970), 24–25.

62 See, for example, the dissertation *De scripturis profanis a Paulo Apostolo allegatis* by Georg Philipp Olearius (1680–1741), professor of theology at the University of Leipzig, where he points out that “Paulum imprimis Apostolum in allegandis profanorum scriptorum testimoniis fuisse assiduum apud omnes [...], ut inde quoque argumentum duxerit Hieronymus, quo multo profanae eruditio apparatu instructum fuisse sanctum illud τῆς ἐκλογῆς σκεῦνος ostendat”; see Olearius, *De scripturis profanis a Paulo Apostolo allegatis* [...] (Leipzig, 1701), 4*.

63 Ibid., 15*: “Nam Socrates ostendere volens: Paulum Graecis literis eruditum fuisse, inter alia haec dicit: ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ, φθείρουσιν ἥθη χρηστὰ ὄμιλίαι κακαῖ, δείκνυσι, μὴ ἀνήκοον τῶν Ἐυριπίδου δραμάτων τυγχάνοντα [...]”

64 The Lutheran Theodor Hackspan, for example, professor of theology at the University of Altdorf, denied the authenticity of the vowel points. See Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche*, 401.

65 Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*; also see note 4 above.

66 One example of the futility of such attempts would be August Pfeiffer's defense of the authenticity of the vowel points, which clearly misses the point: “[...] *Puncta hodierna ab Auctoribus θεοπνέυστοις sunt profecta* [...] *Sine quo Scriptura neque integra certa exhibetur, sine eo a Scriptura S. non est exarata*. Quoniam sic periclitaretur Scripturae Sacrae perfectio & certitudo, tantopere ab ipso Auctore Scripturae Sacrae depraedicata *Proverb. VIII:8. Psal. XIX:9. CXIX:105. 2 Tim. III:15. 2 Petr. 1:19. Atque sine vocalibus Scriptura*

1646, the arch-orthodox Abraham Calov (1612–1686),⁶⁷ professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, had published an angry response to Morin's *Exercitationes biblicae*, defending the inspiration of all canonical books of the Old Testament, as well as the authenticity of both Hebrew letters and vowel punctuation.⁶⁸ Calov, however, became best known for his virulent attack on Grotius, whose “unreasonable parallels to pagan writers” made it into the top ten of his causes for erroneous interpretation.⁶⁹ But Calvinists, no less concerned than Lutherans about the stability and authority of the sacred texts, did not sit back idly and, in response to the work of Cappel, confirmed the inspiration of both vowels and consonants in the *Formula consensus Helvetica* (1675).⁷⁰

Sacra neque integra neque certa exhibetur. E. Non *integra*, quia deesset altera essentialis scriptoris pars, nec viva DEI vox esset ad plenum repraesentata, cum tamen DEUS eadem, quae dixit κατὰ φήμην & plene scribi quoque voluerit [...].” See August Pfeiffer, *Opera omnia quae extant philologica* [...] (Utrecht, 1704), 706–7.

- 67 On Calov, see Kenneth G. Appold, *Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context* (Tübingen, 1998), as well as Volker Jung, *Das Ganze der Heiligen Schrift: Hermeneutik und Schriftauslegung bei Abraham Calov* (Stuttgart, 1999).
- 68 Calov's response to Morin was his *Criticus sacer Biblicus: de Sacrae Scripturae autoritate, canone, lingua originali, fontium puritate, ac versionibus praecipuis, imprimis vero Vulgata Latina, & Graeca LXX. interpretum, in quo ultra octingenta Scripturae loca aut illustrantur, aut vindicantur* [...] (Wittenberg, 1646). See Henning Graf Reventlow, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung*, vol. 3: *Renaissance, Reformation, Humanismus* (Munich, 1997), 226–27.
- 69 Abraham Calov, *Biblia Testamenti Veteris illustrata* [...] (Dresden and Leipzig, 1672), 18: “Ethnicorum Scriptorum intempestiva collatio [...] quod saepe in Grotio observavimus: vel denique ε λέξει & phrasí Exoticorum Scriptorum sacros Deis amanuenses, importuna, inofficiosa, aut intempestiva sua χρόσει dijudicant [...].”
- 70 See *Formula Consensus Ecclesiarum Helveticarum Reformatarum* [...] in *Collectio Confessionum Ecclesiis Reformatis Publicatarum*, ed. H.A. Niemeyer (Leipzig, 1840), 731: “II. In specie autem Hebraicus Veteris Testamenti Codex quem ex traditione Ecclesiae Iudaica, cui olim *Oracula Dei commissa sunt*, accepimus hodieque retinemus, tum quoad consonas, tum quoad vocalia, sive puncta ipsa, sive punctorum saltem potestatem, et tum quoad res, tum quoad verba θεόπνευστος, ut fidei et vitae nostrae, una cum Codice Novi Testamenti sit Canon unicus et illibatus, ad cuius normam, ceu Lydium lapidem, univerae, quae extant, Versiones, sive orientales, sive occidentales exigendae, et sicubi deflectunt, revocandae sunt. III. Eorum proinde sententiam probare neutiquam possumus, qui lectionem, quam Hebraicus Codex exhibet, humano tantum arbitrario constitutam esse definiunt, quique lectionem Hebraicam, quam minus commodam iudicant, configere, eamque ex LXX. Seniorum aliorumque versionibus Graecis, Codice Samaritano, Targumim Chaldaicis, vel aliunde etiam, imo quandoque ex sola ratione emendare religioni neutiquam ducunt [...].”

The *Ars Clerici*, or How to Read a Text

Although Cappel, Morin, and Grotius were all dead by the time of Reimarus's fateful visit to Le Clerc, the issues they had raised were not. In fact, much later when Reimarus himself had already been swayed into the camp of non-believers, the illustrious Benjamin Kennicott (1718–1783) of Oxford expressed his debt to Cappel, even if self-adulation forced him to humbly admit the superiority of his own method.⁷¹ As a young and still untainted theologian, Le Clerc had briefly sojourned to Saumur, where barely anything seemed reminiscent of its former glory, and the spirits of John Cameron (1579–1625)⁷² and Cappel had been expelled by a resolute Calvinist orthodoxy. Yet, it is probably fair to say that in the course of his career, Le Clerc not only most thoroughly absorbed and synthesized the work of Cappel and Grotius, but also spun a theoretical framework out of it, which he himself most boldly put into practice. That this won him more foes than friends in theological circles must hardly have come as a surprise to a scholar who always seemed on the lookout for confrontation and the publicity that came with it. A substantial number of the many smaller dissertations by aspiring young theologians at German universities contained attacks against the famous Remonstrant scholar from Amsterdam, who generally did not miss an occasion to mock or comment on them.⁷³ So what sort of things could Le Clerc have mentioned to Reimarus that still met the latter's

⁷¹ See Benjamin Kennicott, *The State of the Printed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament Considered [...] (Oxford, 1753–59)*, vol. 2, 279–80: “The Man, who first undertook to bring the Printed Text of the *Old Testament* to the Test of sound Criticism, was the learned and now justly-celebrated Ludovicus Cappellus, in his *Critica Sacra*, the Work of Six and Thirty Years; a work, which, notwithstanding the Violence with which the Publication of it was (for the space of Ten Years) oppos'd by some, notwithstanding the Virulence with which is was condemn'd after Publication by many others (and is condemn'd to this very day by a few) and notwithstanding some undoubted Mistakes in particular places, will be a lasting Monument of Fame to its Author [...] and then [I shall] proceed to give some Extracts from the Hebrew MSS before-mention'd, which will tend to establish and compleat the Arguments of *Cappellus*, and to silence the principal Objection of *Buxtorf* and his other Adversaries”; on Kennicott, see David Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key: Anglo-Jewry's Construction of Modern Jewish Thought* (Princeton, 2000), 23–57; also Burnett, “Later Christian Hebraists,” 795–801.

⁷² Axel Hilmar Swinne, *John Cameron—Philosoph und Theologe (1579–1625). Bibliographisch-kritische Analyse der Hand- und Druckschriften, sowie der Cameron-Literatur* (Frankfurt, 1968).

⁷³ In his *Parrhasiana*, Le Clerc, for example, writes: “Il falloit donner cet avertissement aux Etudiants Allemands, afin qu'ils ne croient pas, qu'il est en leur pouvoir de troubler le repos de Mr. L.C. par leurs lubelles, lors qu'il leur plaira, & d'acquérir de la réputation, en

objection as too profane? On what grounds and to what extent did Le Clerc treat the Bible like any other book?

The boldness of Le Clerc's treatment of the sacred text can partly be derived from his refusal to grant the Hebrew language any privileged status.⁷⁴ In a short but illuminating dissertation prefixed to his controversial commentary on the Pentateuch, Le Clerc follows in the footsteps of Grotius, Scaliger, and Huet⁷⁵ when he dismisses claims that view the Hebrew of the Old Testament as the primeval language of humankind.⁷⁶ Although “one single language seems to have been spoken most certainly in Noah’s family before the Deluge,” contends Le Clerc, the scattering of the people after Babel saw the gradual development of different dialects, just in the same way as “Spanish, Italian, and French originated from Latin.” Therefore, what originally was one single language eventually became the Arabic of Arabs, the Chaldean of the Chaldeans, and the Canaanean dialect of the Canaanites.⁷⁷ But these languages developed over

l’obligeant de leur répondre.” See *Parrhasiana ou Pensées Diverses* [...], vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1699), 401–2.

⁷⁴ On the subject of the “language of Paradise,” see Maurice Olander, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass., 2008).

⁷⁵ The theologian from Magdeburg Johann Justus von Einem, for example, writes: “Nam in Dissertatione de ea, lingua Ebraea sentit. Nam in Dissertatione de ea, quae extat in prolegomenis, translationi, paraphrasi, & commentario ejus in librum Geneseos praemissa, id primum sibi evincendum sumsit, *linguam Ebraeam non magis primaevam esse, quam alias orientales*. Qua quidem in re jam praeentes sibi habuit HUG. GROTIUM, JOSEPHUM SCALIGERUM ad Eusebium, PETRUM DAN. HUETIUM [...].” See Johann Just von Einem, *Selectae animadversiones ad Johannis Clerici Scripta* [...] (Magdeburg, 1735), 85–86.

⁷⁶ Jean Le Clerc, “Dissertatio de Lingua Hebraica,” in *Johannis Clerici Commentarius in Mosis prophetae Libros Quinque cum ejusdem versione et paraphrasi perpetua* [...] (Amsterdam, 1693; Tübingen, 1733), i–xii; on this topic in general, see Allison P. Coudert, ed., *The Language of Adam* (Wiesbaden, 1995); see also Arno Borst’s magisterial *Der Turmbau von Babel: Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völke*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1957–63); also Daniel Droixhe, *De l’origine du langage aux langues du monde: études sur les XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Tübingen, 1987).

⁷⁷ Jean Le Clerc, “Dissertatio de lingua hebraica,” iii: “UNICA ante Diluvium videtur fuisse Lingua, certe una in familia Noachi fuit, ad consilium usque condendae Babelis, hoc est, dum in eodem loco universa mansit. Sed postquam, ortis ad Babylonem dissidiis, in varias terrarum oras sparsa est; temporis tractu, cum dissitae per terras familiae aut nulla, aut rara inter se commercia haberent, variae enatae sunt Dialecti. Sic videmus ex una Latina Lingua Hispamicam, Italicam, & Gallicam Linguis natas, ut singularum multiplices Dialectos omittamus [...]. Igitur primaeva Lingua variis rationibus immutata

time, and historical circumstances were frequently responsible in that virtually all of them absorbed and appropriated elements from other languages.

The Hebrew language of the Old Testament is no exception for Le Clerc. He believed it highly unlikely that the name of Moses originated in the Hebrew language since he received his name from “the daughter of the Pharaoh,” who spoke “undoubtedly Egyptian.”⁷⁸ Whereas, according to Le Clerc, from the time of Moses to the age of Ezra, the Hebrew language remained reasonably unchanged due to a lesser degree of interaction of the tribes with adjacent civilizations, the contamination of the language increased especially after the Babylonian captivity, when

many Jews no longer lived in Judea, but in neighboring regions such as Syria, Egypt or even more remote kingdoms, and they gathered annually on holidays in Jerusalem; it could not have happened that the Language only of those living outside of Judea was corrupted but also of those living in Jerusalem, since they interacted and intermarried with the newcomers.⁷⁹

Le Clerc seemed hardly convinced by the occurrence of paronymy in Hebrew, such as מִנָּה [human, man] as a derivative from אַדְמָה [earth, soil], in support of its claim to primeval uniqueness. Quite the contrary, instances of paronymy are a common feature to all languages. Nobody would dare to say that Latin was the primeval language, just because of the morphological similarity of *homo* [man] and *humus* [soil].⁸⁰ Neither does the Hebrew of the Old Testament have, according to Le Clerc, exceptional aesthetic qualities. Quite the contrary: since the beauty of a language is determined by the copiousness of its vocabulary as well as the perspicuity and elegance of the works it produces, the Hebrew

est, & ab Arabibus quidem in Arabismum deflexa, à Chaldaeis in Chaldaismum detorta, à Chananaeis in Chananaeam Dialectum paullatim conversa.”

78 Ibid., ii.: “Quin & ipse Moses nominis sui originem ex Hebraica voce derivavit, induxitque Pharahonis filiam Hebraice loquentem, quae sine dubio Aegyptiaca Lingua utebatur.”

79 Ibid., x: “[...] adeo ut à temporibus Mosis, ad Hesdrae aevum, multum immutata non fuerit [...]. Sequentibus etiam aetatisbus quibus innumeri Judaei non in Iudea vivebant, sed in vicinis regionibus, ut in Syria, aut in Aegypto, aut etiam in remotioribus regnis, & Jerosolomitam sacrorum causa quotannis se conferebant; fieri non potuit quin adulteraretur, non eorum tantum Lingua qui extra Iudeam vivebant, sed etiam Jerosolimitanorum ipsorum, qui cum advenis illis quotidie versabantur, & connubiis miscabantur.”

80 Ibid., ii.: “Similiter in Latina Lingua, quam primaevam fuisse nemo somniavit, dixeris hominem virorum primum a Numine dictum, quod ex *humo* formatu fuisse.”

of the Old Testament stands little chance vis-à-vis Greek and even Latin.⁸¹ For Le Clerc, this deficiency was ingrained in Hebrew culture. Unlike the Greeks and Romans, who cultivated the arts and literature, “the Hebrews neglected not only grammar, the liberal arts, and other disciplines, by which languages augment the vocabulary that embellishes them, but they also never became acquainted with rhetoric.”⁸² Such a crude and uncultivated civilization would then also have been incapable of comprehending the elevated and sublime language of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Le Clerc suggests, God revealed himself to humans in the language and style common among the ancient Hebrews.⁸³ If this not unprecedented distinction between message and style does not quite amount to a complete denial of verbal inspiration, nonetheless, paired with Le Clerc's etymological argument about how Hebrew incorporated elements from other languages, it suggests that Scripture not only needed to be read within the cultural and historical context of ancient Israel, but of the ancient world in general.

Not surprisingly, then, this is exactly what Le Clerc proposes in his magisterial *Ars critica*,⁸⁴ his magnificent manual on how to read, restore, and interpret classical texts.⁸⁵ Having already cast Hebrew from its primeval throne and taken the findings of Cappel and Grotius to heart, Le Clerc no longer distinguishes between sacred and profane texts, but provides general guidelines, amply illustrated with examples from both classical authors and biblical text. According to Le Clerc, all writing systems have been subject to change. This includes characters, accentuation, and interpunctuation. The characters of the Hebrew Bible are just as unauthentic as the present Greek or Latin minuscule. For Le Clerc, the closest remnants of the original biblical script are probably the square-shaped letters of the incomplete Samaritan Pentateuch that

81 Ibid., vii.: “Linguarum omnium laudes in tribus potissimum rebus sitae sunt in copia vocabulorum & phrasium, in perspicuitate orationis, ejusque elegantia, cuius Rhetoribus Canones describuntur; quibus rebus, multo Hebraica superiores sunt multae Linguae, & Graeca quidem prae caeteris; nec quasi pulcherrimam, jactari Hebraicam posse, manifestum est.”

82 Ibid., viii.: “Verum Hebrei non modo Grammaticam Artesque, ac Disciplinas alias, quarum opera Linguae augentur vocabulis, neglexerunt, sed Rheticam, quibus eadem expoliuntur, numquam cognoverunt.”

83 Ibid., ix: “Sed eas res ita, per homines Hebraeos, nobis patefecit Deus, ut stylo sibi, gentique suaे consueto uterentur.”

84 Jean Le Clerc, *Ars critica*, 4th ed., 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1712).

85 See Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752* (Oxford and New York, 2006), 432–35.

Morin published half a century earlier.⁸⁶ But although the Hebrew characters had slowly taken on their present form, earlier codices had remained unaccented and unvocalized without any punctuation. This, among other things, became a prominent source of error for the scribes even before the Masoretes. By the time the “Masoretes added vowel points, the proper pronunciation of the Hebrew language was already unknown” and their actions “solidified the mistakes in their codex,” which is obvious from the numerous scattered errors in the Pentateuch that are absent from the Samaritan codex.⁸⁷

For Le Clerc, an awareness of the various sources of mistakes that occurred in the course of the transmission of the biblical text and—ideally—the skill to emend faulty passages are just as much a prerequisite for biblical criticism as an understanding of the cultural milieu that created the text.⁸⁸ Criticism, however, is for Le Clerc an entirely dispassionate endeavor. The role of the critic is not to determine the moral value or veracity of what has been said, but rather to elucidate what the author’s intentions were and in what context the content needs to be understood.⁸⁹ To aid with the latter, the critic may enlist a number of disciplines—such as geography, history, and comparative linguistics—so that even dark and obscure passages can be properly illuminated. For the biblical text this requires, for example, a familiarity with the works of Herodotus or Diodorus Siculus, whose treatment of Egyptians and Chaldeans may provide important insights into the customs and laws of the ancient Hebrews as well.⁹⁰

86 Le Clerc, *Ars critica* (see note 84 above), vol. 2, 5–7: “Apud Latinos antiquissimis temporibus, character erat quadratus & majusculus, qualis in veteribus Inscriptionibus & mss. etiamnum cernitur [...] Graecorum etiam characterum aliqua videtur esse facta mutatio, nam antiquissimi quadrati essent, quales in Inscriptionibus visuntur, postea inter scribendum videntur rotundiores esse facti [...]. Apud Hebraeos, ante tempora captivitatis Babylonicae, in usu erat id litterarum genus, quod à Phoenicibus acceperant, & quod vulgo *Samariticum* vocatur, eo quod id servarint Samaritae.”

87 Ibid., vol. 1, 84: “Massorethae enim puncta vocalia addiderunt contextui, eo tempore quo legitima linguae Hebraicae pronunciatio ignota erat, & menda codicis sui consecrarunt; it adparet in Pentateucho, vel ex Codice Samaritano, a quo, mendoso licet, multa minuta menda, quae in Hebraico passim occurrunt, absunt.”

88 Ibid., vol. 1, 1: “Criticen, ut a definitione ordiamur, vocamus *Artem intelligendorum Veterum Scriptorum, sive numeris adstricta, sive soluta oratione utentium, & diagnoscendi quaenam eorum genuina scripta sint quae spuria; tum etiam quae sint ad regulas Artis exacta, quae vero secus.* Dicitur ΚΡΙΤΙΚΗ, quod ejus ope de sensu & elegantia dictorum, deque aetate scribentium *judicmus.*”

89 Pitassi, *Entre croire et savoir*, 52.

90 Le Clerc, *Ars critica*, vol. 1, 91: “*Herodotus Halicarnasseus & Diodorus Siculus, aliique Aegyptiorum & Chaldaeorum res scripsere; unde non dubia lux multis Hebraeorum moribus, ut ostendit Joannes Spencerus, in Opere cuius inscriptionem antea adtulimus. Idem & nos demonstravimus, in Commentario in Pentateuchum, multis in locis [...].*”

The text is thus historicized at the expense of theology, and, more specifically, Christology.

The lens of the *analogia fidei*⁹¹ yields to the dispassionate eye of the historian and philologist, whose angle does not permit the miraculous and supernatural. Rather than reverting to the *sensus mysticus*, obscure passages are unlocked with the help of profane disciplines and analogies from profane authors. Although it has always been permissible to adduce external disciplines in order to assist with the interpretation of Scripture, they remained only the helping hands of a theological interpretation with the *analogia fidei* at its center. The rule of thumb was always “profanis auctoribus utamur, non fruamur” [we shall employ rather than enjoy profane authors], as one of Le Clerc’s critics, the pastor from Magdeburg Johann Justus von Einem (1685–1762), so poignantly articulated. With the dismissal of the *analogia fidei*, however, these tools became the true masters of exegesis, since they alone determined how a passage ought to be read and understood.⁹²

Le Clerc justifies this reduction by distinguishing between the theological and philological commentary, whereby he leaves little doubt that he favors the latter.⁹³ With the affirmation of a frequently rocky transmission history of classical texts and the exclusion of theological, philosophical, or moral predispositions, Le Clerc has factually eliminated the dividing line between *philologia sacra*⁹⁴ and *philologia profana*, which becomes evident in his celebrated series of commentaries, whose concept he briefly outlined in his dissertation

91 August Pfeiffer in his *Critica sacra* defines the *analogia fidei* as the “highest doctrine about the celestial articles of faith that has been obtained from those passages of Scripture, where the Holy Spirit operates about these untainted, complete, and unadulterated words in an especially clear fashion, just as in a distinct place.” See August Pfeiffer, *Opera omnia* (Utrecht, 1704), 719: “Analogiam fidei [...] vocamus summam coelestis doctrinæ de Articulis Fidei petitam e talibus Scripturae Sacrae locis, ubi Spiritus S. de iis verbis rotundis, planis, & perspicuis, praecipue ex professo, & ceu in propria sede [...] agit.” This means for Glassius that “there is no doctrine of faith that has not been put forth someplace in Scripture in intelligent and clear terms.” See Salomon Glassius, *Philologia sacra, qua totius SS. Veteris et Novi Testamenti Scripturae tum stylus et literatura, tum sensus et genuinae interpretationis ratio et doctrina libris quinque expenditur ac traditur [...]*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig, 1713), 498: “Nullum est fidei dogma, quod non alicubi propriis & perspicuis verbis in Scriptura sacra proponatur.”

92 Johann Justus von Einem, *Selectae animadversiones ad Johannis Clerici Scripta [...]* (Magdeburg, 1735), 65.

93 See Reventlow, “Bibelexegese als Aufklärung,” 10–11.

94 On the concept of the *philologia sacra*, see Johann Anselm Steiger, *Philologia Sacra: Zur Exegese der Heiligen Schrift im Protestantismus des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2011).

*De optimo genere interpretum Sacrae Scripturae.*⁹⁵ There, he proposes an unconventional tripartite structure, which includes a Latin translation, a paraphrase, and a commentary, all of which Le Clerc judges most capable of balancing the discordances of two completely different linguistic systems. Especially the additional paraphrase was unusual, because most sixteenth- and seventeenth-century commentaries, whether Lutheran or Calvinist, provided either a Latin translation that closely followed the Vulgate with an additional parallel commentary or a commentary that took the form of *Annotata* or *Adnotationes* without the corresponding biblical text. In Le Clerc's own words, the role of the “paraphrase was to demonstrate in only few words what we think, whereas the commentary, in a more detailed fashion, why we do so.”⁹⁶ Thus, the paraphrase becomes the bridge between an at times obscure literal translation of the Hebrew text and the rich historical and philological information of the commentary. The paraphrase processes this information, corrects the Hebrew text, undistorted by theological considerations, and incorporates Le Clerc's own interpretation as an alternative. The result is what one may call a “de-theologization” of Scripture, where even theologically explosive passages are treated with indifference.

A Rite of Passage: How Reimarus Read His Job

Not surprisingly, the theological world reacted with outrage and disgust. From Rostock⁹⁷ to Rome,⁹⁸ theologians hastened to their desks to rescue the sacred text and write invectives against the Remonstrant scholar from Holland. The accusations were almost always the same: Le Clerc does not recognize the sacred and exceptional status of the Hebrew language;⁹⁹ he is an avid admirer of Cappel and Grotius and follows their claim that the sacred text was faulty

95 Jean Le Clerc, “Dissertatio de optimo genere interpretum S. Scripturae,” in *Joannis Clerici Commentarius in Mosis prophetae Libros Quinque*, xii–xxiv.

96 Ibid., xiv: “Sic Paraphrasi paucis verbis quid sentiremus, Commentario copiosius quare ita sentiremus ostendimus [...]”

97 Johannes Wolff, *Observatio philologica ad vocem נָבָל Gen.1.1 quam contra Dn. Jo. Clericum Deo sospitante supremo et consiente amplissima facultate philosophica praeside M. Johanne Joachim Weidnero [...]* (Rostock, 1705).

98 Johann Christoph Wolf, in his *Bibliotheca Hebraea* (vol. 2, p. 97), mentions an anonymous Italian treatise against Le Clerc, published as *Lettera di *** scritta ad uno de' suoi Amici sovra un Saggio di Critica del Sign. Giovanni Clerico intorno alla poesia degli Hebrei [...]*.

99 Johann Justus von Einem, *Animadversiones*, 85: “[...] minus praeclare de lingua Ebraea sentit.”

and corrupted;¹⁰⁰ like Grotius, he is a Judaizer, because he asserts that the pronouncements of the prophets need to be understood in their own context rather than as references to a future messiah;¹⁰¹ and he values profane authors over sacred ones and employs them maliciously against the Holy Books rather than use them sparingly, as maidservants instead of overlords of the biblical θεόπνευστοι, the divinely inspired scribes.¹⁰² Most importantly, however, he completely disregards the key rule of a *hermeneutica sacra*, so cultivated by Cocceius, and conceals any references to Christ in the Old Testament.¹⁰³

By the time Reimarus visited Le Clerc, he must have been quite familiar with most of these accusations. At Jena and Wittenberg, where Reimarus was a student, most of Le Clerc's works were discussed with fervor. The *Leucorea* in particular had excelled in becoming a center of attack against Le Clerc. Reimarus's former teacher and future colleague at the *Gymnasium illustre*,¹⁰⁴ the quarrelsome Sebastian Edzardus,¹⁰⁵ for example, published a lengthy tractate against Le Clerc's interpretation of Genesis 49:10 shortly before moving to Hamburg, while he was still an adjunct professor at Wittenberg.¹⁰⁶ But even in Reimarus's

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 88: “[...] familiare ipsi est, cum Capello & Grotio, cuius perpetuus est admirator, ut sana etiam ac integra scripturae loca corrupta & vitiata esse, sine ulla necessitate adferat.”

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 97–98: Nihilo minus Clericus *judaizat*, animi pendet, dubiusque hinc inde vacillat, nescius, in quam se potissimum partem interdum vertat [...] in v.t. non tantum esse vaticinia, quorum verba pertinent duntaxat ad res sub Messia futuras, sed & alterum genus vaticinorum, quae ita concepta sunt, ut respiciant quidem, si series orationis spectetur, res ante Messiam impletas [...].”

¹⁰² Ibid., 100: “Immo interdum plus profanis auctoribus, cum primis historicis, plus auctoritatis tribuit, quam divinis, illosque male in S.S. usurpat. Cautela vero haec semper observanda est: textus sacer non est emendandus secundum relationem scriptorum profanorum; sed hi ubi discrepant, sunt corrigendi secundum scriptores sacros, quia hi sunt θεόπνευστοι, atque ita majorem fidem merentur, quam illi.”

¹⁰³ Ibid., 102: “Quemadmodum Coccejus Christum ubique in v.t. omni studio quaesivit; ita pari modo & industria Clericus cum Grotio illi ubique se subduxit, & ab eo plane se abalienavit.”

¹⁰⁴ Reimarus even wrote the eulogy for Edzardus. See Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Pietas erga Collegam Virum nobilissimum, amplissimum, doctissimum, Sebastianum Edzardum, Logices et Metaphysics in Gymnasio Hamburgensi Professorem [...] ad Funus beate defuncti [...] (Hamburg, 1736).*

¹⁰⁵ See “Sebastian Edzardus,” in *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. 2 (Hamburg, 1854), 135–47.

¹⁰⁶ Sebastian Edzardus, *Jacobi Patriarchae de Schiloh Vaticinium, a depravatione Johannis Clerici, In Pentateuchum Commentatoris [...] (London, 1698); also Edzardus, Disputatio utrum nomen אלהים a profano Cananaeorum errore originem ducat, adversus Clericum (Wittenberg, 1696).*

native Hamburg, Le Clerc's work was viewed with skepticism. In 1721, the same year in which Reimarus met Le Clerc, Reimarus's mentor Johann Christoph Wolf had expressed subliminal criticism of Le Clerc's *Ars critica*,¹⁰⁷ which the latter countered with an overly harsh review of the second volume of Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebraea*.¹⁰⁸ For Reimarus's sake, one may hope that this incident occurred after his encounter with Le Clerc or that he was at least able to keep his close relationship with Wolf to himself.

Not surprisingly, Le Clerc's views must have sounded eerie in Reimarus's ears. A recent graduate from Wittenberg, where the spirit of Abraham Calov, the archdeacon of Lutheran orthodoxy, still haunted the corridors, Reimarus still remained very connected to his *alma mater*. After his return from his *peregrinatio academica*, Reimarus would, though only for a few months, become an adjunct to the *Leucorea*'s faculty of philosophy before taking a post as principal of the *Grossen Stadtschule* of Wismar,¹⁰⁹ a college preparatory school under Swedish jurisdiction on the Baltic. Both at Jena and at Wittenberg, and perhaps at the *Gymnasium illustre* in Hamburg,¹¹⁰ Reimarus had received a thorough instruction in the principles of *hermeneutica sacra*, which the Lutheran theologian Johann Jacob Rambach, also a graduate from Jena, would later

¹⁰⁷ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, vol. 2 (Hamburg, 1721), 263: "Io. Clericus, Prof. Theologus Arminianorum Amsteldamensis, variis libris hoc argumentum, quamvis non ubique aeque recte feliciterque illustravit [...]."

¹⁰⁸ For Le Clerc's review of Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, vol. 2 (Hamburg, 1721), see *Bibliothèque ancienne et moderne*, t. 16 (1721), 332–65, especially 339, where Le Clerc writes: "Mr. Wolf trouve qu'à cet égard, je n'ai pas également réussi par tout, *non aeque recte feliciterque*. Personne ne le sait mieux, que moi-même; mais si j'avois suivi les idées de notre Auteur en tout, ou en partie; je craindrois, qu'une autre sorte de gens ne fissent le même jugement de ce que j'aurois écrit."

¹⁰⁹ Rudolf Kleiminger, *Die Geschichte der Grossen Stadtschule zu Wismar von 1541 bis 1945: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Schulwesens in Mecklenburg und zur Stadtgeschichte Wismars*, ed. Joachim Grehn (Kiel, 1991), 90–92.

¹¹⁰ Shortly after arriving at the University of Jena, Reimarus wrote a detailed letter to his mentor Johann Christoph Wolf, informing him about his progress. Both Glassius and Pfeiffer are among the authors Reimarus specifically refers to: "Hinc et factum est, ut ex quo Hamburgum reliqui, eadem non intermisserim, nec de manibus unque deposuerim, siquidem integrum hunc annum vel in perscrutando utriusque foederis instrumento, vel in iis ipsis Auctoribus, qui Critices praecepta tradiderunt, Glassio, Pfeiffero, Hottingero aliisque perlegendis, vel in excolenda Rabbinismi notitia consumsi, et mox etiam Chaldaica atque Syriaca aggredi paro"; letter Reimarus to Johann Christoph Wolf, 23 March 1715, SUB HH, Supellex 119, fol. 424r.

codify in his *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*,¹¹¹ a much-cherished manual of Lutheran orthodoxy.

Reimarus had certainly also read the standard works of Lutheran exegesis, Matthias Flacius's *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*¹¹² or Salomon Glassius's *Philologia sacra*,¹¹³ and he was naturally familiar with August Pfeiffer's *Hermeneutica sacra* and his *Critica sacra*,¹¹⁴ which he would later recommend as a textbook for his own students.¹¹⁵ These authors assert that Hebrew was the mother of all languages,¹¹⁶ that the Hebrew text in its present form had been transmitted virtually intact,¹¹⁷ that a proper reading tied to the principle of the *analogia fidei*¹¹⁸ would show that Scripture contained possibly obscure but not contradictory passages,¹¹⁹ and that the *sensus mysticus* was often required where the

¹¹¹ Johann Jacob Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae* (Jena, 1725). See also Paul Herbers, "Die hermeneutische Lehre Johann Jakob Rambachs" (Ph.D. diss., Heidelberg University, 1952); on Rambach, see Ulrich Bister et al., eds., *Johann Jacob Rambach: Leben- Briefe- Schriften* (Basel, 1993); also Walter Hug, *Johann Jacob Rambach (1693–1735): Religionspädagoge zwischen den Zeiten* (Stuttgart, 2003); also Peter Stemmer, *Weissagung und Kritik: Eine Studie zur Hermeneutik bei Hermann Samuel Reimarus* (Göttingen, 1983), 46–47; Udo Sträter, "Rambach, Johann Jacob" in *RGG*, vol. 7 (2004), 31–32.

¹¹² See note 25.

¹¹³ Salomon Glassius, *Philologia Sacra* [...] (Leipzig, 1713); see also Veronika Albrecht-Birkner, "Glass, Salomon" in *RGG*, vol. 3 (2000), 936–37.

¹¹⁴ See August Pfeiffer, *Opera omnia quae extant philologica* (Utrecht, 1704), t. 2, 625–818. See "Pfeiffer, August" in *RGG*, vol. 6 (2003), 1231.

¹¹⁵ Between 1728 and 1768, Reimarus lectured numerous times on Pfeiffer's *Critica sacra*. For a chronological record of Reimarus's yearly lectures and seminars, see Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Göttingen, 1979), 28–32.

¹¹⁶ Pfeiffer, *Opera*, 545: "[...]. Pronunciamus proinde, Linguam sanctam Ebraicam primaevam esse, & non modo Protoplantis, sed & omnibus antediluvianis & usque ad confusionem vernaculaum fuisse."

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 715: "Saltem hodiernus Codex Masoreticus veram lectionem vel in Textu vel in margine exhibet, & sic alicubi repraesentat, adeoque non plane amisit"; also Salomon Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, 1–63.

¹¹⁸ Johann Jacob Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*, 457–58: "In locis obscurioribus ad normam analogiae fidei interpretandis."

¹¹⁹ Pfeiffer, *Opera*, 633: "Nam talia loca sunt obscura, sensus patens nullus est, nedum multiplex; latens vero nonnisi unicus, qui vero aestimandus est non ex variis significationibus vocum seorsim acceptarum, verum ex significatione circumstantiis, quibus Textus hic & nunc immersus est, competente"; Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, 267: "[...] Cum causas illas δικαιουμεῖν in Vet. Testam. tantum stylo locum habere asserat; fateatur ergo genus sermonis, quo Spiritus S. in Nov. Test. scriptis uititur, planum, perspicuum, &

sensus literalis hit a dead end.¹²⁰ In most cases, those truly obscure passages had little dogmatic value anyway and were extremely rare.¹²¹ Although external tools could, according to Rambach, be very helpful, and parallels to other disciplines or references to profane authors might provide overall guidance to a better understanding of the sacred text, they should be used sparingly and with extra care. The laws of the *analogia fidei* are different from those of profane scholarship.

According to Rambach, the sacred style could not “be expounded with the works of Aeschylus, Pindar, Terence, Cicero, Seneca [...] as Jean Le Clerc has done so preposterously.”¹²² Mixing the sacred and the profane, as Le Clerc had done,¹²³ could lead to entirely inaccurate results, especially if profane sources are used to judge the veracity of the sacred text. The Egyptians, for example, had a contrasting idea about the age of the world that differed markedly from that of Moses, and Strabo’s description of Canaan as pitifully barren had nothing in common with Moses’ land of milk and honey. Undoubtedly Moses, who had at least seen its borders, must be a more credible source than that pagan Strabo, who had never personally even caught a glimpse of it.¹²⁴

ab ambiguitatibus liberum esse, praesertim cum No.Test. (dicente saepius LUTHERO) sit
instar Solis, quae v.t. ceu Lunam splendore suo illustrat.”

¹²⁰ Glassius, *Philologia sacra*, 350: “Iam vero in multis Scripturae textibus non id modo, quod ex verbis immediate colligitur, sed & sublimius quiddam & mysticum hominibus cognoscendum atque intelligendum DEUS exhibet, uti ex re ipsa & Scripturae exemplis constat. Ergo praeter sensum literalem [...] mysticum etiam dari, qui ex rebus ipsis hauritur, negari nulla ratione potest.”

¹²¹ Ibid., 282: “Objiciat quis, quaedam nihilominus in Scripturis obscuro & perplexo sermonis genere proponi [...]. 1. Pleraque illorum non concernunt dogmata fidei. 2. Et pauca sunt, a quibus ad Scripturam universam nullus consequentiae nexus [...]”

¹²² Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*, 285: “Phrasis sacra, *legem cordi inscribere ex AESCHYLI, PINDARI, TERENTII, CICERONIS, SENECAE* monumentis exponi non potest, ut praepostere facit IO. CLERICUS [...].”

¹²³ Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*, 284: “Deinde observandum [...] *parallelismum profanorum auctorum* non semper esse tutum adminiculum, veram vocis significationem definiendi. Quo pertinet quando [...] CLERICUS, malae caussae patrocinaturus, in art. *Crit. Part. II. Sect. I. capp. VII. PP. 210.* conquisitus multorum.”

¹²⁴ Johann Jacob Rambach, *Erläuterung über seine eigene Institutiones Hermeneuticae Sacrae* [...] (Giessen, 1738), 270: “[...] Die Egyptier machen in ihrer Chronologie die Welt viel tausend Jahre älter, als sie nach der Chronologie Mosis ist. Da fehlets nun nicht unter den Christen an absurden Köpfen, welche es lieber mit den Egyptiern als mit Mose hierin halten wollen. Desgleichen STRABO gibt einen anderen Abriß von Canaan, als Moses, und beschreibt es als ein steriles elendes Land, da es doch Moses und andere als ein fruchtbare Land beschreiben, als ein Land, darin Milch und Honig fliesset, d.i. darin eine

No matter what, the Holy Scripture remained the sole βάσις ἐπιστήμης, “the sole basis of knowledge,” as Johann Gerhard’s successor at Jena, the theologian Johann Michael Dillherr, expressed in his treatise *De usu lectionis scriptorum secularium et antiquitatis* [On the use of reading profane ancient writers].¹²⁵

A commentator was also no polyhistor¹²⁶ and should by all means avoid trying to be one.¹²⁷ Truth comes first of all from within Scripture and cannot be brought to Scripture from outside. A *philosophia moralis*, a *scientia rerum naturalium, mathematicarum disciplinarum sive physicarum*, and *medicinae* may serve only to disprove factual misconceptions, but these disciplines should not be used to destroy the truth of miracles or to dismiss the supernatural just because they are lacking the means to explain them.¹²⁸ These were roughly the principles that had been hammered into Reimarus’s mind and that he himself passed on to his own students at the *Gymnasium illustre*.

Still, in 1731, Reimarus lectured on the *analogia fidei*,¹²⁹ and although he had received training from one of the most skilled and renowned polyhistors of his time, Johann Albert Fabricius, who even wrote the preface to Daniel Georg Morhof’s *Polyhistor*,¹³⁰ he seems to have been able to separate the two. But as

grosse Menge von guter Weide und Bienen anzutreffen sey. Ob nun gleich Moses, der an den Grentzen desselben gewesen, und andere scriptores sacri, die darinnen gewohnet haben, viel besser von dessen Beschaffenheit zeugen können, als ein heydnischer STRABO, der das Land nie mit den Augen gesehen, so hat sich doch ein caput heteroclitum, IOAN. TOLANDUS, funden, der dem STRABONI mehr Glauben als Mosi zugemessen”; see also John Toland, *Origines judaicae* (The Hague, 1709).

¹²⁵ Georg Brückner, “Johann Michael Dilherr,” in *ADB* 5 (1912), 225; Johann Michael Dilherr, *De usu lectionis scriptorum secularium et antiquitatis* [...] (Jena, 1635), 5.

¹²⁶ On the term, see Martin Mulsow, “Polyhistorie,” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*, ed. Gerd Ueding (Tübingen, 2003), vol. 6, 1521–26; also Anthony Grafton, “The World of the Polyhistors: Humanism and Encyclopedism,” in *Central European History* 18 (1985), 31–47; Herbert Jaumann, “Was ist ein Polyhistor? Gehversuche auf einem verlassenen Terrain,” in *Studia Leibnitiana* 22 (1990), 76–89.

¹²⁷ Rambach, *Erläuterung*, 261: “[...] man muß sich hüten, daß man sich nicht verwirre in tanto adparatu eruditionis humanae, oder auf die Gedanken komme, es könne niemand die heilige Schrift erklären, der nicht ein vollkommener polyhistor sey [...].”

¹²⁸ Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*, 456–98.

¹²⁹ See Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum* (1731), ed. Peter Stemmer (Göttingen, 1983); see also Stemmer, *Weissagung und Kritik*, 59–91; more recently, Christoph Bultmann, “Early Rationalism and Biblical Criticism on the Continent,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Saebø, vol. 2, 878–84.

¹³⁰ Daniel Georg Morhof, *Polyhistor; literarius, philosophicus et practicus* [...] (Lübeck, 1732); on Morhof in general, see François Waquet, ed., *Mapping the World of Learning: The Polyhistor of Daniel Georg Morhof* (Wiesbaden, 2000).

is now generally accepted, a crucial shift in his thought must have occurred around that time, which would eventually culminate in his complete rejection of a *hermeneutica sacra*, a *de facto* convergence of the principles of *philologia sacra* and *philologia profana*.¹³¹

Since an exact dating of this shift is not possible, Reimarus's writings of the 1730s are particularly intriguing. Rightfully, then, the significance of his commentary on the book of Job has been duly noted.¹³² It probably comes closest to what one may call his most extensive public treatment of an individual book of the Bible. The fact that this publication falls right into the period when Reimarus may have started to waver from his own orthodox upbringing makes the entire episode both delicate and intriguing. Naturally, in Reimarus's case, there is always the danger of trying to read too much between the lines in order to find evidence of his radicalization.¹³³ The success of such an undertaking seems highly unlikely, given the almost perfect façade Reimarus was able to maintain throughout his life.¹³⁴ With the exception of a few friends and his own children, Reimarus kept his theological doubts pretty much to himself.¹³⁵

Contrary to some claims,¹³⁶ his lecture record from 1730 until his death in 1768 does not reveal striking shifts or breaks. When he lectured on the *Hermeneutica sacra* (as late as 1742–43)¹³⁷—a time when he most definitely was already working on certain portions of the *Apologie*—this does not necessarily mean that he had altered his earlier lecture from 1734–35, the *Ars interpretandi*

¹³¹ See chapter 2, note 95.

¹³² Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, “Erbauliche versus rationale Hermeneutik: Hermann Samuel Reimarus’ Bearbeitung von Johann Adolf Hoffmann’s ‘Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob,’” in *Hermann Samuel Reimarus, 1694–1786: Beiträge zur Reimarus-Renaissance in der Gegenwart*, ed. Wolfgang Walter (Göttingen, 1998), 23; Johann Adolf Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob, darin das Buch selbst aus der Grund-Sprache mit dem darin liegenden Nachdruck ins Deutsche übersetzt [...] (Hamburg, 1734)*.

¹³³ On the notion of “reading between the lines,” see Leo Strauss’s classic text *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago, 1988).

¹³⁴ See Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann’s “Anmerkungen,” in Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Kleine gelehrté Schriften: Vorstufen zur Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, ed. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann (Göttingen, 1994), 642.

¹³⁵ In an earlier version of the prologue Reimarus writes: “In aller Zeit mögen sie etwa fünf vertraute Freunde von mir gelesen haben, jedoch ohne die geringste Abschrift davon zu nehmen. Ich finde auch bis auf diese Stunde noch groß Bedenken sie gemein zu machen [...]”; see Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes* (Frankfurt, 1972), vol. 2, 639.

¹³⁶ See Stemmer, *Weissagung und Kritik*, 90.

¹³⁷ Reimarus, *Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie*, 30.

sacras litteras seu hermeneutica sacra,¹³⁸ or his *Collegium hermeneuticum*¹³⁹ in any groundbreaking way. The titles of several of his later lectures are all in line with a very traditional *hermeneutica sacra*¹⁴⁰ as key elements in the education of future Lutheran theologians and ministers.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, his published writings are not unimportant when it comes to making statements about his radicalization. Without losing sight of the *Apologie*'s time-frame, it is often more rewarding with Reimarus to pay close attention to what he omits, what he does not emphasize, as we have seen in chapter 2, and the circumstances that influenced the particular publication. An acknowledgment of his biographical timeline is particularly important because both Wolf and Fabricius exercised a powerful influence on him, personally and intellectually. This is equally true during Reimarus's Job project, which was anything but a labor of love and, without Wolf's or Fabricius's hand, would most likely not have found its way into Reimarus's lap.¹⁴² Both Wolf and Fabricius were members of the Patriotic Society, a literary circle of writers, scholars, and lawyers who met periodically under the Erasmian premise to "advise rather than to vex, to be useful rather than to insult; and to assist the practices of man rather than to obstruct."¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Ibid., 29.

¹³⁹ See SUB HH, Cod. Theol. 1469. This lecture is undated, but since it was copied by A.H. Greiff, presumably a student of Reimarus's, who had also made a copy of a different lecture by Reimarus, his *Observationes philologicae in Prophetas Minors* from 1735 (SUB HH, Cod. Theol. 1335), we may assume that it dates from about the same time. See Gerhard Alexander, "Neue Erkenntnisse zur 'Apologie' von Hermann Samuel Reimarus," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 62 (1976), 152–53.

¹⁴⁰ The structure of Reimarus's *Collegium Hermeneuticum* (StUBH, Cod. Theol. 1469) is very similar to the main body of Lutheran theoretical writings on the *Hermeneutica sacra* (Pfeiffer, Glassius, etc.).

¹⁴¹ See, for example, *Observationes ad Pericopas Evangelicas*, 1752 [UB Rostock, MSS. THEOL. 4° 138 (2)] or the *Animadversiones criticae in vernacula Lutheri interpretationem Geneseos, Exodi, Levitici, Numerorum*, 1764/65 [UB Rostock, MSS. THEOL. 4° 138 (1)].

¹⁴² In his preface, Reimarus admits that he was pulled into this project against his own wishes: "Ich gestehe aber gleich Anfangs offenherzig, daß ich gantz wieder meine Absicht und Vermuthen hinein gezogen bin"; see Hermann Samuel Reimarus, "Vorrede" (unpaginated), in *Johann Adolf Hoffmanns Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 13*.

¹⁴³ "Admonere volumus, non mordere: prodesse, non laedere; consulere moribus hominum, non officere"; quoted in Franklin Kopitzsch, *Grundzüge einer Sozialgeschichte der Aufklärung in Hamburg und Altona*, 2nd ed. (Hamburg, 1990), 272–73.

One of their fellow Patriots was the devout and somewhat reclusive merchant-scholar Johann Adolf Hoffmann (1676–1731),¹⁴⁴ who, after failing to secure an academic post, found fulfillment in an ascetic lifestyle characterized by Erasmian Neo-Stoic piety and best-selling books of moral edification that he financed partly by trading gems, coins, and the like.¹⁴⁵ Shortly before his death in 1731, Hoffmann had embarked on an edifying commentary on the book of Job, but the manuscript remained unfinished and must have fallen into the hands of Fabricius, who passed it on to his talented son-in-law Reimarus to employ his philological skills and prepare Hoffmann's manuscript for publication. With these narrow perimeters already in place, there was little room for disobedience to his father-in-law or Wolf. But Reimarus's own contribution and creativity were seriously hampered by the preserved manuscript. He was anything but ecstatic about this work, especially after a closer examination of Hoffmann's notes revealed that the project would require more than just a few finishing touches:

Initially I thought that I would leave Hoffmann's commentary as it is, without even making my own name known publicly. But I soon realized that it would not just irritate me alone to simply correct another person's work [...]. Apart from that, I recognized that Hoffmann's literary translation would serve those well who would like to know the meaning of the original text, but that it did not provide the German reader with the proper context at once.¹⁴⁶

This diplomatically phrased disagreement is certainly not surprising: a philologically attuned mind here encounters the edifying commentary of the

¹⁴⁴ On Hoffmannn, see "Hoffmannn, Johann Adolf," in Hans Schröder, *Lexikon der hamburgischen Schriftsteller* (Hamburg, 1857), vol. 3, 316–19. The most extensive biographical information about Hoffmann still provides the anonymous sketch ("Nachricht von dem Leben und den Schriften des Verfassers") appended to the tenth edition of Johann Adolf Hoffmannn, *Zwey Bücher von der Zufriedenheit nach den Gründen der Vernunft und des Glaubens* (Hamburg¹⁰, 1745), 603–40.

¹⁴⁵ See Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Erbauliche versus rationale Hermeneutik," 28–33.

¹⁴⁶ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, "Vorrede," 13*: "Ich dachte erstlich des Herrn Hoffmannns Erklärung gantz alleine zu lassen, und meinen Namen gar nicht kund zu thun. So aber fand ich bald, daß es mir nicht allein verdießlich seyn würde ein fremdes Werk bloß zu korrigieren [...]. Zu dem sahe ich wohl, daß die Hoffmannnische buchstäbliche Uebersetzung denen angenehm seyn könnte, die gerne wissen mögten wie es eigentlich nach dem Grund-Text lautete, aber daß sie doch den deutlichen Zusammenhang teutschen Lesern nicht völlig auf ein mahl vor Augen legte."

piously devoted Hoffmann. The book of Job seemed like a natural fit for the moralizing Christian apologist Hoffmann, who translated and published an edition of the “golden words” of Marcus Aurelius after having purged it of the “pagan views” that would “embarrass several thousands of Christians.”¹⁴⁷ Job offered worldly wisdom encapsulated by the idea that “God [...] through his sage and benevolent care always conceived some good out of the wicked”¹⁴⁸ and at the same time transcended the more profound truths of resurrection and salvation. The plot begins with Job’s afflictions and his lament, followed by a succession of speeches by Job’s four friends who are all convinced of Job’s guilt. After Job’s responses to their accusations, the book culminates in God’s whirlwind speech, where he silences the *homunculus* by providing a mind-blowing account of creation, starting with the elements and ultimately asserting his power even over such formidable beasts as Behemoth and Leviathan.

Among the books of the Bible, Job is one of the most perplexing and philologically challenging, as Luther himself had admitted.¹⁴⁹ This philological difficulty may have been the reason why either Wolf or Fabricius confidently entrusted Reimarus with the project. He had been one of their most talented students and was now, as their colleague, teaching classes in introductory Hebrew and Chaldean, as well as the Hebrew idiomisms,¹⁵⁰ which had formerly been taught by Wolf himself, possibly with Reimarus among his

¹⁴⁷ See “Nachricht,” 618: “Wo etwa in den sonst güldenen Worten des Antoninus, welche viele tausend Christen beschämen, eine heidnische Meynung mit eingeschlichen ist, die hat er in den Anmerkungen geändert [...].”

¹⁴⁸ Anonymous review of “Johann Adolph [sic] Hoffmann’s neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob [...],” in *Deutsche Acta Eruditorum* 186 (1734), 443: “Sein Haupt-Zweck war, durchgehends in dieser Erläuterung zuzeigen, wie Gott aus dem Bösen, so er zuläßt, nach seiner weisen und günstigen Vorsorge, alzeit suche etwas gutes hervorzubringen, welches ohnstreitig die Haupt-Absicht des ganzen Vortrags in dem Buche Hiob selbst ist [...].”

¹⁴⁹ “Das Buch Hiob ist nicht eyn schweer buch des synnes halben, sondern alleyn der sprachen halben”; see “Vorrede Martini Luther,” in *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar, 1956), vol. 10: *Die Deutsche Bibel*.

¹⁵⁰ In his preface to the edition, Reimarus explicitly mentions the peculiarities of the Hebrew language and the difficulty of providing a faithful translation of idiomisms: “[...] hingegen, wo das Hebräische im Teutschen entweder gar keinen oder einen verkehrten Verstand haben würde, andere deutsch-übliche Redens-Arten gleiches Verstandes in die Stelle der Hebräischen setzte [...]. Ich gründe mich dabey auf die Idiotismos der Hebräischen Sprache, auf den Nachdruck der Wörter, auf den Sinn einer verblümten oder Sprichworts-Rede, auf die gewöhnligliche Verschweigung des Segen-Satzes, auf den Zusammenhang, auf den Zweck, auf den Parallelismus, mit einem Worte auf die Hülfss-Mittel die eine vernünftige Hermeneutic an die Hand giebt”; see Hermann Samuel Reimarus, “Vorrede,” 14*.

students.¹⁵¹ In their eyes, this work must have seemed to be a perfect fit for Reimarus's skills.

Apart from that, did they not bring their prodigal son back to Hamburg from what Reimarus perceived as dismal exile in Wismar, where teachers up in arms against the haughty and finical headmaster made the latter's experience almost unbearable?¹⁵² Gratitude and respect for his mentors must certainly have played a role in Reimarus's decision to take on this project because he does not fail to acknowledge both of them in his preface to the work.¹⁵³ But Reimarus's barely legible handwritten corrections and additions to the Hoffmann manuscript show that he was somewhat uncomfortable with the enterprise.¹⁵⁴ This discomfort pervaded the project to such an extent that Reimarus, "starting with the third chapter, where the difficult style sets in," decided to "add a brief albeit proven paraphrase."¹⁵⁵

The result of this decision is a very odd work that is, at least in part, not entirely unlike Le Clerc's series of commentaries. But whereas the latter's translation, paraphrase, and commentary harmoniously complement each

¹⁵¹ See the manuscript of Johann Christoph Wolf's undated lecture *De Idiotismis Hebraicis*, SUB HH, Cod. Theol. 1452; Reimarus lectured on the same topic in 1730/31. See Reimarus, *Handschriftenverzeichnis und Bibliographie*, 28.

¹⁵² See Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, "Einleitung" in Reimarus, *Kleine gelehrte Schriften*, 24–26.

¹⁵³ Reimarus, "Vorrede," 15*: "Findet der geneigte Leser aber einige gute Nachricht von Schrifften mehr darin [...] so wisse er, daß ers nicht mir sowohl als zweyen Welt bekannten Gelehrten unsrer Stadt zu dancken habe. Des einen, nemlich Ihro Hoch-Ehrw. Des Herrn Pastoris Wolffii gedencke ich um so viel mehr [...] weil Er mir nicht allein vormahls den Weg zu solchen Wissenschaften getreulich angewiesen, wodurch die Schrift muß erklärert werden, und vor fünf Jahren zu dem Beruf sie andere wiederum zu lehren, ein grosses mit beygetragen [...]. Der andere ist unser hochberühmte Herr D. Fabricius, zu dessen weitläufiger und gründlicher Wissenschaft, wie auch ungemeiner Wilfährigkeit so viele auswertige Gelehrte Zuflucht nehmen; Daher es mir wäre zu verdencken gewesen, wenn ich bey seinem geneigten mündlichen Unterricht und herrlichen Bibliothec nicht Hülffe gesucht hätte, und solche jetzt mit vielem Danck erkennete, da ich die Ehre habe mich einen Discipul, und jetzigen Collegen und Schwieger-Sohn ihn zu nennen."

¹⁵⁴ An incomplete portion of Hoffmann's manuscript with Reimarus's notes and corrections has survived and is catalogued in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg under SUB HH, Cod. Theol. 1295.

¹⁵⁵ Reimarus, "Vorrede," 13*: "Kurtz, ich entschloß mich da ich bey dem fünften Capittel war, eine kurtze jedoch bewiesene Paraphrasin von dem dritten Capittel an, da der schwere Stylus anfängt, dabey zu fügen, und die Capittel die ich versäumet hatte in dem Anhange nachzuholen."

other, public outcry notwithstanding, Reimarus's paraphrase and commentary create a sharp contrast to Hoffmann's translation and commentary.¹⁵⁶ Although Reimarus does not explicitly question the truth of the biblical account, his focus on philology, antiquarianism, polyhistory, and the applied sciences neutralizes Hoffmann's commentary, thus depriving Scripture of its status as the ultimate book of inspiration and devotion.

The long historical prologue of the work already foreshadows things to come. Apart from establishing that "Job was a real person,"¹⁵⁷ the reader learns about the origins of the ill-fated confusion of Job and Jobab,¹⁵⁸ the whereabouts of the land of Uz,¹⁵⁹ the confusion of the biblical Job with a Turkish general by the same name, buried in Constantinople,¹⁶⁰ and Job's impressive lifespan of roughly two hundred years.¹⁶¹ Reimarus addresses basically everything from Job's social status—he does not believe that Job was a king, but he

¹⁵⁶ Sometimes the disagreement between Hoffmann and Reimarus is so obvious that the latter warns his reader as early as the preface: "[...] so wird auch ein jeder aus meiner Paraphrase erkennen, wie weit ich in der Erklärung jedes Ortes seiner Meynung sey oder nicht. Sintemahl der Herr Hoffmann dieses mit den meisten Auslegern gemein hat, daß er an verschiedenen Orten besondere Auslegungen machet; die deßwegen dennoch curios und der Aufmerksamkeit würdig bleiben, da ich mich wenigstens nicht zum Richter aufwerffe ob die meinige besser sey." See Reimarus, "Vorrede," 9*.

¹⁵⁷ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, "Vorbericht," 1*-8*: "Ob würcklich ein Hiob gewesen."

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 10*-11*: "[...] daß der Irthum aus der Vertauschung des Hiobs mit dem Jobab entstanden, welches anfänglich als eine Rand-Glosse möge zum Hiob geschrieben seyn, und mit der Zeit in den Text selbst eingerücket worden [...]. Es erhellet zugleich daraus, daß der Urheber dieser Erfindung kein Hebräer, sondern ein Helleniste müsse gewesen seyn. Denn die Namen יְהוָה und בָּבָר lassen sich nicht wohl vertauschen, weil sie nicht allein den Buchstaben und Klange nach, sondern auch nach der Form und Bedeutung gar sehr unterschieden sind [...]. Dagegen, weil die Hellenisten Ἰωβ und Ἰωβᾶς geschrieben, hat solche Vertauschung leichter bey ihnen geschehen können [...]."

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 19*-25*.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 19*, note b; the seventeenth-century Swiss theologian and Orientalist Johann Heinrich Hottinger writes about the "two Jobs": "Quod vero Jobum hunc Constantinopoli sepultum quidam scribunt, somnium est, & turpis ἀνιστορησία, ex duorum συνωνύμων confusione orta. Alius enim Jobus ille, quem tumulus Constantinopolitanus tegit, fuit, dux militiae Muhammedanae in proelio occisus, & deinde Constantinopolin, ut ibi sepeliretur, deductus [...]; see Johann Heinrich Hottinger, *Historia Orientalis quae ex variis orientalium monumentis collecta [...]*, 2nd ed. (Zurich, 1660), 55.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 45-46*.

was more than just a wealthy citizen¹⁶²—to his afflictions, which he finds too numerous to diagnose properly.¹⁶³

The bulk of this information originates from strictly philological and antiquarian works such as the voluminous writings of Friedrich Spanheim¹⁶⁴ and Samuel Bochart,¹⁶⁵ the groundbreaking work in comparative Semitics by Johann Heinrich Hottinger,¹⁶⁶ Edward Pococke,¹⁶⁷ and Johann Albert Schultens (1686–1750),¹⁶⁸ whom Reimarus calls his “benefactor,” an indication that he may have met the famous professor from Franeker personally, most likely during his *peregrinatio academica*,¹⁶⁹ as well as Adriaan Reland’s *Palestina illustrata*,¹⁷⁰ a standard work on Near Eastern geography and culture. What is striking is that many of these antiquarian, heavily philological publications originated in a Calvinist or, more precisely, often in a Dutch Calvinist milieu. Unlike their Lutheran peers, whose *philologia sacra* promoted an almost exclu-

¹⁶² Ibid., 35*: “Inzwischen würde man doch der Sache zu viel thun, wenn man den Hiob bloß für eine Privat-Mann halten wollte; indem er zwar nicht den Königlichen Namen, jedoch der Sachen nach alles dasjenige gehabt, was etwa die kleinen Könige hatten, von welchen Abraham den Loth errettete.”

¹⁶³ Ibid., 40–41*: “Die Kranckheit Hiobs alleine, hielte so viel schmertzhaftre Zufälle in sich, daß ein gelehrter Commentator einen Zusammenfluß von zwey und dreyfig besonderen Kranckheiten daraus machet [...]. Ob es ein Aussatz, oder Kretze, oder Elephantiasis, oder Uleus Syriacum oder sonst was zu nennen wäre, [...]. Ich will sagen, daß keine der bekannten und bißher angegebenen Kranckheiten zulänglich scheinet, diese Zufälle zu erklären [...].”

¹⁶⁴ Friedrich Spanheim, *Historia Jobi*, in *Friderici Spanhemii Opera omnia* (Leiden, 1703), t. 2, 2–146.

¹⁶⁵ Samuel Bochart, *Opera omnia. Hoc est Phaleg, Canaan, et Hierozoicon* [...], 3rd ed. (Leiden, 1692).

¹⁶⁶ Johann Heinrich Hottinger, *Thesaurus philologicus, seu Clavis Scripturae* [...], 3rd ed. (Zurich, 1696); see notes 35 and 36 above.

¹⁶⁷ Moses Maimonides, *Porta Mosis sive dissertationes aliquot suis in varias Mishnaioth, sive textus Talmudici partes, commentariis praemissae opera & studio Eduardii Pocockii* (Oxford, 1655).

¹⁶⁸ Schultens’s celebrated Job commentary was not published until 1737. But Reimarus was able to make good use of his earlier work, *Animadervsiones in Librum Jobi* (Utrecht, 1708); on Schultens, see Burnett, “Later Christian Hebraists,” 792–95.

¹⁶⁹ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, “Vorbericht,” 62–63*: “[...] und hat der in diesen Sachen ungemein erfahrene Herr Schultens, mein geneigter Gönner, noch unlängst die schwesterliche Verwandschafft des alten Arabischen mit dem Hebräischen deutlich dargethan [...]. Daher wir denen vielen Danck schuldig sind, die vermittelst ihrer ausnehmenden Wissenschaft in solchen Sprachen, uns darin den Weg zeigen können; worunter, was das Arabische betrifft, der grosse Bochart und jetzt belobter Herr Schultens billig den grössten Rang verdienen.”

¹⁷⁰ Adriaan Reland, *Palestina ex monumentis veteribus illustrata* [...] (Utrecht, 1714).

sively Christological exegesis, Calvinist theologians generally treated natural and biblical revelation as equals, since the harmony of the natural world and history offered glimpses of a divine presence.¹⁷¹ Reimarus completely follows the latter's suit insofar as he shows more interest in exploring the antiquarian and philological components rather than the moralizing Christological one. He supplements them with eyewitness accounts by travelers such as Jean de Thévenot (1633–1667)¹⁷² or Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656–1708)¹⁷³ and fuses them with the descriptions of Ptolemy, Diodorus Siculus, and Strabo. It is an altogether unemotional and cool survey, very much in the tradition of the polyhistor, where the reader is overpowered by an indigestible wealth of scholarly information.¹⁷⁴ One can picture Reimarus pulling volume after volume from the shelves of Fabricius's and Wolf's libraries and hassling them with questions, bold and obtrusive as he undoubtedly was.¹⁷⁵

The theological content is almost entirely submerged and barely perceptible for the reader. This latent “de-theologization” of Scripture—a term I am using with caution, but one that most appropriately describes a necessary, preliminary phase toward a more blatant profanation—is most palpable where Reimarus’s commentary encounters Hoffmann’s moralizing and edificatory remarks. Even a casual look at both commentaries reveals the striking differences. Though philologically skilled, but no match for Reimarus, Hoffmann confines himself to a bare minimum of bibliographical information. If at all, he generally explains the respective passages by cross-referencing or by drawing on some of the insights into the Orient he may have gained from one of his business ventures. In 31:26–27,¹⁷⁶ Job asserts his godliness for not having succumbed to the worship of the sun and the moon: “Have I looked up at the sun in its brightness or at the full moon in its movements, so that my heart was secretly enticed and I kissed my hand in worship.”¹⁷⁷ Hoffmann suggests that

¹⁷¹ Schmidt-Biggemann, “Erbauliche versus rationale Hermeneutik,” 44.

¹⁷² Jean de Thévenot, *Voyages de Mr. de Thevenot, tant en Europe qu'en Asie & en Afrique [...]*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1689); on de Thévenot, see Lane M. Heller, “Le testament olographe de Jean de Thévenot,” *XVII^e siècle* 167 (1990), 227–34.

¹⁷³ Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant: fait par ordre du Roy [...]* (Lyon, 1717); on de Tournefort, see Duane Isely, *One Hundred and One Botanists* (Ames, 1994), 71–73.

¹⁷⁴ On earlier representatives of this “culture of describing,” see Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago, 2006).

¹⁷⁵ See Introduction above, note 35.

¹⁷⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, I am using the notation of the BHS throughout this chapter.

¹⁷⁷ See Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* (New York, 1978), 342.

Job describes here the most ancient kind of idolatry, mainly because people then could not identify any other direct cause for the growth of crop and cattle. For Hoffmann, this was proof that the book of Job was among the most ancient books in the Bible, but even more importantly, it showed that its protagonist did not set his heart on the merely mundane aspects of life. He remained a steadfast believer and did not lapse into the idolatrous practice of heathens to greet the sun with a kiss to his hand.¹⁷⁸

This bare-boned approach to what could have been a rich and most interesting interpretation should not come as a surprise. Hoffmann's work falls completely in line with most commentaries by Lutheran and Reformed luminaries, who generally viewed this passage as a reference to idolatry.¹⁷⁹ But none of them showed a particular inclination of moving beyond the fact that "Job had abhorred this kind of ungodliness," to which, as Ezekiel¹⁸⁰ tells us, "at one point even the Israelites succumbed."¹⁸¹ An exception is probably the Hebraist and theologian from Halle, Johann Heinrich Michaelis (1668–1738), who does not shy away from incorporating a more extensive philological and antiquarian analysis.¹⁸² Michaelis followed in the footsteps of Philipp Melanchthon by proclaiming that "Scripture could not be understood theologically if it

¹⁷⁸ Johann Adolf Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 814: "Die erste Abgötterey fiel auf die Sonne und den Mond; und solches rührte daher, weil sie ihre Verehrung bloß richteten auf die äusserliche sichtbare Ursache des Wachstums auf dem Felde und Gedeyens bey der Heerde. Da fiel ihnen denn nichts mehr in die Augen als die Sonne [...]. Dieses mogte wohl noch zu Hiobs Zeiten die einzige und bekannteste Abgötterey seyn; welches denn von dem Alterthum des Lebens und des Buches Hiob zeuget. Hiob sagt sich; weil sein Hertze nicht an dem irdischen geklebet, so sey sein Gemüth auch nicht bey denen äusserlichen Ursachen des irdischen Seegens stehen blieben [...]. Daß sich mein Hertz heimlich verleiten lassen; von der Gewohnheit so vieler Völcker in und um mein Vaterland; meine Hand zu einem Kuß an den Mund zu legen. D.i. Sonne und Mond als GOTT anzubeten [...]."

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, Sebastian Schmidt, *In Librum Ijobi Commentarius* [...] (Strasbourg, 1670), 1195: "Sed & quod in sit crimen Idolatriae crassae, qua divinus creaturis defertur, in primis Soli & Lunae, plerique hic statuunt."

¹⁸⁰ Ezek. 16.

¹⁸¹ Jean Mercier, *Commentarii, in Iobum, et Salomonis Proverbia, Ecclesiasten, Canticum Canticorum* (Leiden, 1651), 247: "[...] in quam impietatem videmus & Israelitas aliquando prolapsos esse ut ex Ezech. videmus qui Israelitas reprehendit quod facies orientem solent versus converterent ejus adorandi causa. Ab hac impietate se hoc loco fatetur Iob abhorruisse [...]."

¹⁸² Johann Heinrich Michaelis, *Uberiorum annotationum philologico-exegeticarum in Hagiographos Vet. Testamenti libros volumen secundum. Continens annotationes in librum Iobi* [...] (Halle, 1751), 403–5.

is not understood grammatically.”¹⁸³ But just as the humanist legacy was not the key to theological truth for Melanchthon, Michaelis’s commentary balances his more extensive references to profane authors with a strong Christological focus.¹⁸⁴

When we now explore how Reimarus approached this passage, we immediately recognize that Job moves from the center of a Lutheran *hermeneutica sacra* to the margins of a straightforward philological analysis, seasoned with sprinkles of antiquarian insights into the culture of the Near East. Reimarus first explains that the Hebrew expression נֵר [light] is commonly used as a metaphor not only for the sun, but for celestial bodies in general. This, however, is by no means peculiar to the Hebrew language. According to Reimarus, we find the same instance in Greek, where authors do not always write about the λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοι [the bright light of the sun] but are often more sloppy and just use the term φάος, “light.” In the *Odyssey*, for example, during the visit to Phylos of Athena and Telemachus, the goddess, disguised as Mentor, would rush the talkative Nestor to hold his breath and make a sacrifice to the gods, because ἥδη γάρ φάος οἴχεθ' ὑπὸ ζόφον [the light has already gone to the gloom of the world below].¹⁸⁵ Likewise, the Egyptians, contends Reimarus, referred to the sun as Ὡρος [Horos], to which both Plutarch and Macrobius testify, and without much reservation he signs on to Le Clerc’s slightly adventurous theory that Herodotus’s¹⁸⁶ reference to Ὀυρωτάλτ [Ourotalt], whom the Arabs worship, was equally an allusion to the sun.¹⁸⁷

Le Clerc had pointed out that a careful examination of the term revealed “traces of the words נֵר,” which means “fire or heat,” and of “the word הַלָּה,” which means “splendor.” This makes perfect sense, “because the sun was the

¹⁸³ Johann Heinrich Michaelis, “Praefatio ad Lectorem,” in *Biblia Hebraica, ex aliquot manuscriptis et compluribus impressis codicibus, item masora tam edita [...]* (Halle, 1720), 13: “Vere enim alicubi dixit Melanchton: *Scriptura non potest intelligi theologicice, nisi intelligatur grammaticae [...].*”

¹⁸⁴ See Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, “Johan Heinrich Michaelis und seine ‘Biblia Hebraica’ von 1720,” in *Zentren der Aufklärung I: Halle. Aufklärung und Pietismus*, ed. Norbert Hinske (Heidelberg, 1989), 34–35.

¹⁸⁵ *Odyssey* 3.335.

¹⁸⁶ *Hist.* 3.8.

¹⁸⁷ Hoffmannn, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 820–21 (p): “Auch wird bey den Griechen die Sonne nicht allein λαμπρὸν φάος ἡελίοι, sondern auch schlechthin φάος genannt. Hom. Od. γ. Ηδη γάρ φάος οἴχεθ' ὑπὸ ζόφον. Die Aegyptier hiessen die Sonne Ωρος Macrob. Sat. I.21. adde Plut. de Jf. & Os. 366 a. Die Chaldäer und Perser ihre Oromazes gehöret auch gewisser massen hierher [...]. Sonderlich der Araber ihr Ὀυρωτάλτ Herod. III. 8. welches Clericus billiger auf die Sonne zieht und von נֵר und הַלָּה solis splendore ableitet [...].”

hottest and brightest of all celestial bodies.”¹⁸⁸ But Reimarus is more skeptical about the claim that a similar exercise could be done with the name of Hercules, as the French theologian Pierre Jurieu had proposed.¹⁸⁹ In his *Histoire critique des dogmes et des cultes*, Jurieu suggested that behind every name of a pagan deity stood generally some god or goddess of nature or the worship of some animal. For Jurieu, the oldest forms of idolatry were solar and lunar worship, which was so common in the cult of Baal among the Phoenicians, of Belenus among the Gauls, and of Apollo among the Greeks that these were in fact all the same thing because each is nothing but a reference to the sun.

According to Jurieu, the original Phoenician name “Hercules” could be broken into הָאֵיר כֹּל, which means “he makes everything shine.” To Jurieu, it was clear that the Romans, who had commercial contact with the Carthaginians, the descendants of the Phoenicians, adopted this theology as their own.¹⁹⁰ Reimarus does not provide us with any reason why he did not accept Jurieu’s theory about Hercules. But he agrees with him on the significance of solar and lunar worship in antiquity. Just as Jurieu had demonstrated, names such as Baal, Moloch, Astharoth, or Melechet are all references to the sun, stars, and moon.¹⁹¹ Interpreting Job’s plea as a reference to idolatry would also make perfect sense in regard to where the story was situated geographically. With the Chaldeans and Arabs as his neighbors, Job was basically surrounded by sun and moon worshipers. The latter were especially well known for cultivating

¹⁸⁸ Jean Le Clerc, *Veteris Testamenti libri hagiographi* [...] (Amsterdam, 1731), 128: “Si probe perpendamus nomen *Ourotalt*, in eo inveniems vestigia vocis שׁוֹר, aut *our*, quae *ignem*, aut *calorem* significat, & vocis תְּהִלָּה *thoholah*, quae est *splendor*; & quarum significatio optime consentit cum natura *Solis*, calidissimi & splendissimi omnium siderum.”

¹⁸⁹ Hoffmannn, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 821 (p): “Ich geschweige , daß nach Herrn Iurieu Meynung [...] Hercules seinen Namen haben soll von הָאֵיר כֹּל illuminavit omnia.”

¹⁹⁰ Pierre Jurieu, *Histoire critique des dogmes et des cultes* [...] (Amsterdam, 1704), 606–7: “Nous supposons toûjours comme un principe, que sous chaque nom de Dieu sont cachez [sic] des Dieux Naturels [...]. On ne peut douter en façons du monde, que le Dieu Naturel, caché sous le nom de *Bahal*, ne soit le Soleil [...]. Le Belenus des Gaulois, & Achileïens, étoit, selon eux, Apollon [...]. Au reste le nome prouve que c'étoit le Soleil. *Hercule* est pur Phénicien, הָאֵיר כֹּל *Heir coul*, signifie dans cette langue, *illuminat omnia*, il éclaire toutes choses [...]. Les Romains, dans le commerce qu'ils avoient avec Carthage, on pris connoissance de leur Theologie, & ont vû qu'ils donnoient à leur Bahal, le titre & l'éloge de *Heir cul*.”

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 606: “[...] *Astoreth* est assurément la Lune [...]. Bahal, *Astoreth*, & l'armée des cieux, qui font mis ensemble, signifient le Soleil, la Lune & les étoiles [...]. Les divers noms, que ce même Dieu a portez [sic] dans la Syrie, font voir que c'est le Soleil. Les Assyriens Palmyreniens l'appelloient *Aglibelus* [...]. Ils l'appelloient aussi *Malacbelus*, composé de Bahal & du mot *Melek* qui signifie Roi, parce qu'il est le Roi des Astres.”

a particular devotion to what, according to Reimarus, Hesychius called ἡλίου ἀνατολὴ [sunrise], as well as to the Full or New Moon:

[...] this reverence consisted in greeting these heavenly bodies by kissing the hand, by blowing them a kiss or, as it is described here, the hand kissing the mouth, which is best expressed by the Latin word *adorare*.¹⁹²

There is not much theology in all of this. In stark contrast to Hoffmann, Reimarus dives aggressively into a straightforward philological and antiquarian analysis, as it was practiced during the seventeenth century by erudites such as G.J. Vossius (1577–1649),¹⁹³ Adriaan Reland (1676–1718),¹⁹⁴ or Thomas Hyde (1636–1703)¹⁹⁵ and that would ultimately find its monumental expression in such voluminous collections of scholarship as Graevius's *Thesaurus antiquitatum romanarum* (1694–99),¹⁹⁶ Jacob Gronovius's *Thesaurus graecarum antiquitatum* (1697–1702),¹⁹⁷ or, somewhat later, Blasius Ugolinus's *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum* (1744–69),¹⁹⁸ as well as the projected but never completed *Thesaurus antiquitatum germanicarum*.¹⁹⁹ Although Hoffmann was not blind to the reference to idolatry, his mindset remains within the strict boundaries of a very conventional Lutheran *hermeneutica sacra*. Reimarus's, by contrast, ventures outside these boundaries. In fact, if we did not know beforehand that this discussion was supposed to be a commentary on the book of Job, we would not automatically conclude that Reimarus was talking about the Bible. Not even the cross references to other scriptural passages where instances of solar or lunar worship are mentioned play any great significance. They are basically treated as another historical source, just as Homer, Herodotus, and Plutarch are. At times, Reimarus's commentary does not sound much different

¹⁹² Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 821 (p): "Dieses Verehren geschahe, wie Hiob anzeigen, indem einer mit einem Hand-Kuß diese Gestirne grüste, ihnen einen Kuß zuwarf, oder wie es hier eigentlich heisset, indem die Hand den Mund küssete; welches mit dem einem Worte der Lateiner *adorare* am besten aufgedruckt wird."

¹⁹³ Gerhard Ioannes Vossius, *De theologia gentili et physiologia christiana* [...] (Amsterdam, 1642).

¹⁹⁴ Reland, *Palaestina ex monumentis veteribus illustrata*.

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Hyde, *Historia religionis Veterum Persarum* [...] (Oxford, 1700).

¹⁹⁶ Johann Georg Graevius, *Thesaurus antiquitatum romanarum* [...] (Utrecht, 1694–99).

¹⁹⁷ Jacob Gronovius, *Thesaurus graecarum antiquitatum* [...] (Leiden, 1697–1702).

¹⁹⁸ Blasius Ugolinus, *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum* (Venice, 1744–69).

¹⁹⁹ See Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria* [...], 3rd ed. (Hamburg, 1760), 45–68.

from his comments in his celebrated edition of Cassius Dio's *Historiae romanae*, which he would finish twenty years later.²⁰⁰

Such cross references, however, are purely philological and rarely typological. Although by no means yet as developed as in the *Apologie*, Reimarus is already very skeptical about inner-biblical allusions, a key principle of the *hermeneutica sacra*. He generally remains within the narrow perimeter of a passage or, at best, of the particular book, even if he has no plausible alternatives to offer. That this was an intentional effort becomes obvious when Reimarus is more outspoken in his disagreement with Hoffmann. In Job 26:12,²⁰¹ God's power is said to have "stilled the Sea" and "struck down Rahab." Nowadays this is often interpreted as the cosmic battle between God and the primeval sea monster.²⁰² Hoffmann ultimately sensed here the forebodings of the Exodus. He pins his conclusion on the ambiguity of the Hebrew terms רָעֵע [to be at rest, to repose; to disturb] and רָהָב [storm, arrogance; Egypt]. According to Hoffmann, the passage could be translated as "by His might he parts the sea" and "by His understanding he smote the arrogant."²⁰³ Hoffmann points out that "whenever human beings are up in arms and obstinate," God through his wisdom intervenes and "makes nature his tool to punish the wicked," just as God had "destroyed Pharaoh."²⁰⁴

But the passage could equally refer to the Satanic serpent, the Leviathan from Job 40:25, because, Hoffmann argues, the Septuagint translated the term רָהָב with κῆτος [sea-monster, huge fish].²⁰⁵ Hoffmann's analysis, however, is, less outrageous than it seems. Granted, Leviathan is nowhere near this passage, but Hoffmann has a point when he discusses the pharaoh. Cappell, Grotius,²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ Cassius Dio Cocceianus, *Historiae Romanae quae supersunt [...]* (Hamburg, 1750–52); on the subject, see chapter 4 below.

²⁰¹ Job 26:12: "By his power he stilled the Sea; by his understanding he struck down Rahab" [בְּכֶחָזְקַתְּוֹנָתָו מִחְצָרָה רָהָב רָעֵע הַיּוֹם בְּתַחַתְּוֹנָתְךָ].

²⁰² Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 280; also Marvin H. Pope, *Job: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, 1973), 185. Modern interpreters also view Job 26:5–14 as still part of Bildad's speech from Job 25. See Gordis, 534.

²⁰³ Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 733: "Durch seine Kraft zerspaltet er das Meer [...]. Und durch seinen Verstand zerschmettert er den Hochmüthigen."

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 733–34: "Wenn die Menschen sich empören und trotzig handeln gegen Gott, so lenkt es Gott durch seine Weisheit so, daß eben die natürlichen Dinge Werckzeuge werden müssen, die Boßhafften zu straffen. Wie Gott auf solche Weise den Pharao vertilget."

²⁰⁵ LXX Job 26:12: "ἰσχύι κατέπαυσεν τὴν θάλασσαν, ἐπιστήμῃ δὲ ἔτρωσε τὸ κῆτος."

²⁰⁶ Hugo Grotius, *Opera Omnia Theologica* (London, 1679), t. 1, 211: "In Hebraeo, *Vi sua scidit mare*: nempe Erythraeum, ut Hebreai transient. *Prudentia ejus percussit superbū Pharaonem*. In Hebraeo **רָהָב** [*superbiae*], sed subintelligitur **שִׁיר** [vir] ut saepe."

and Calmet²⁰⁷ had considered an allusion to the Exodus at least plausible, because רַהֲבָה appears in Isaiah 30:7 and in Psalms 87:4 as an unflattering metaphor for Egypt. Cappel had indicated that the Israelites may have encountered Job during their wanderings in the desert and told him about their miraculous salvation from the Egyptians.²⁰⁸ The Flemish theologian from Franeker, Johannes Drusius (1550–1616), had rejected such an interpretation based on the assumption that Job must have lived before the times of Moses. In fact, according to Drusius, “Job died the same year when the Israelites left Egypt.”²⁰⁹

Reimarus seems less sure about all of this. In his introductory prologue he had leaned toward a later composition of the book. Although Job may have lived before Moses, the events could have been recorded several hundred years later by a Hebrew historian.²¹⁰ Reimarus was also aware that the verb רָעַן could not only mean “to be at rest” but also “to disturb” or “to part.” During the seventeenth century, Samuel Bochart, in the words of Pierre Bayle “one of the most

²⁰⁷ Augustin Calmet, *Commentaire literal sur tous les livres de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament: Job* (Paris, 1712), 243–44: “Ce qui paroît ne convenir qu'au passage de la mer rouge, & à la mort de Pharaon. Si l'on n'étoit pas prévenu de la pensée que Job étoit mort avant Moyse, il n' la mort de Pharaon. Si l'on n'étoit pas prévenu de la pensée que Job étoit mort avant Moyse, il n'y a personne qui d'abord ne le prit ainsi. Mais l'âge de Job n'est pas bien fixé; & nous ne sommes point dans l'obligation de soutenir qu'il ait vécu avant Moyse”; on Calmet, see John W. Rogerson, “Early Old Testament Critics in the Roman Catholic Church—Focusing on the Pentateuch,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Saebo, vol. 2, 843–46.

²⁰⁸ Louis Cappel, *Commentarii et notae criticae in Vetus Testamentum* [...] (Amsterdam, 1689), 454: “*Potentia sua fregit mare, & intelligentia sua percussit רַהֲבָה Aegyptum*. Non semel usurpatur de Aegypto, imo saepius quam aliter. Unde quis non temere conjicere possit, Jobum vixisse eo tempore quo Israelitae in deserto Cadesbarne commorati sunt per 38 annos. Alii malunt ista accipere de procellis & tempestatibus quae in mari ordinarie excitantur, quibusque mare veluti frangitur, & quasi sulcatur, quas Deus postmodum quem libet solo nutu sedat, & commotos fluctus componit, quod posteriore hemistichio volunt significari, quod sic reddi possit, & *intelligentia sua percutit*; hoc est, reprimit, componit, sedat, **רַהֲבָה elationem ejus**, hoc est, tumidos ejus fluctus. Sed **רַהֲבָה** saepius *Aegyptum* quam *superbia* significat, etsi a superbia & fastu videatur sic dicta *Aegyptus*.” From our perspective, however, it would mean that the Israelites would have had to run into Bildad and tell him about their salvation.

²⁰⁹ Johannes Drusius, *Nova versio et scholia in Iobum* [...] (Amsterdam, 1636), 587: “[...] ut possis legere *percutit Aegyptum*. Sed haec accipere de decem plagis Aegypti, vix permittit aetas Jobi: quem mortuum putant eo anno, quum Israelitae egrissi sunt ex Aegypto.”

²¹⁰ Reimarus, “Vorbericht,” 29*: “Was aber die Stellen betrifft da der Wunder Mosis soll gedacht seyn, so erinnere ich nur überhaupt, daß man die Zeit, da das Buch geschrieben, von der Zeit da Hiob gelebt, wohl unterscheyden müsse.”

learned men in the world,”²¹¹ had provided convincing lexical evidence that the term רָהָב was indeed a reference to Egypt. He had established a connection between the term רָהָב, which he transcribed as *Raab* rather than *Rahab*, and the Egyptian²¹² *Rib* or *Riph*, which he translated as pear, an allusion to the shape of the Nile Delta, the heart of the land of Egypt.²¹³ To the modern reader, this attempt to connect botany, topography, and philology might seem ludicrous, but in the seventeenth century, Bochart’s work was considered top-notch scholarship and Reimarus was no exception in his admiration for him. Still, in spite of what might have appeared as overwhelming philological evidence, Reimarus remained skeptical about the allusion to the Exodus:

I cannot deny that these terms have such meaning outside of this context [...]. However, I hardly believe that this passage alludes to that particular incident, because the entire chapter is only concerned with natural wonders in general [...] and I have not discovered a single example so far in which Job purposely refers to the Israelites.²¹⁴

Reimarus’s skepticism is quite revealing, especially once it is contrasted with Jean Le Clerc’s analysis of the same passage. Leaning heavily on Bochart, the latter interpreted this passage as a clear reference to the Exodus, albeit its contextual implausibility.²¹⁵ In the simplest of terms, one could argue that Reimarus is more faithful to what Le Clerc had preached in his *Ars critica*

²¹¹ Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, ed. Pierre Desmaizeaux, 5th ed., 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1740), vol. 1, 585–87: “[...] a été un des plus savans hommes du monde.”

²¹² Bochart obviously meant “Coptic.”

²¹³ Samuel Bochart, *Geographia sacra seu Phaleg et Canaan* (Leiden³, 1692), 58–59: “Exempli gratia, quaeritur cur Aegyptus vel Aegypti pars in Psalmis & in Esaiā בָּרָב *Raab* vocetur: Atque hic interpres multa comminiscuntur, ignari Hebraeum *Raab* idem esse quod Aegyptium *Rib* vel *Riph*, quo nomine hodieque *Delta*, seu pars Aegypti terqueta Nili ostis comprehensa, vocatur a pyri forma. Id enim proprie erat *Rib*.”

²¹⁴ Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 737 (h): “Ich kan auch nicht leugnen, daß die Worte ausser dem Context diesen Verstand haben [...]. Unterdessen glaube ich doch kaum, daß hier auf diese besondere Geschichte gezielt werde, weil im gantzen Capittel nur von allgemeinen Natur-Wundern die Rede ist, und weil ich sonst noch kein Exempel gefunden, da dem Hiob eine intendirte Beschreibung der Israelitischen Begebenheiten in den Mund gelegt würde.”

²¹⁵ Le Clerc, *Veteris Testamenti libri hagiographi*, 107: “Sed haec loquutio motum maris significat [...]. Quia vero adludit ad Mare Rubrum, quod Deus fidit, in gratiam Israëlitarum, ideo *fidit* vertimus [...]. Eodem pertinet quod inferior Aegyptus ab Aegyptiis *Atrib*, id est, *cor pyri* diceretur, ab Arabibus אַלְרִיב *alrib*, quod pronunciant *Errib*, *pyrum*. Qua de re, vide Sam. Bochartum Phal. Lib. IV, c. 25.”

but does not practice here. The ambiguity of the Hebrew notwithstanding, Reimarus does not recognize any connection to the Exodus let alone to the Leviathan.

So far, we have seen how Reimarus's straightforward philological and antiquarian analysis paid little heed to inner-biblical allusions or the *analogia fidei*. His scholarship draws heavily on the work of seventeenth-century humanists and antiquarians and is not unlike the philology that had been perfected during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Holland²¹⁶ by erudites such as Tiberius Hemsterhuis (1685–1766),²¹⁷ Petrus Wesseling (1692–1764),²¹⁸ or Siegbert Haverkamp (1684–1742).²¹⁹ The parallels to his commentary on Cassius Dio have already been noted, but this is only one part of the story. The book of Job, with its abundance of critters and creatures, reveals another facet of Reimarus's erudition that would eventually be characteristic of the positivist dimension of his radical work and which will culminate close to thirty years later in the publication of his pioneering scholarship²²⁰ on animal behavior, the *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere* (1762) as well as his *Vornehmsten Wahrheiten der natürlichen Religion* (1754). Reimarus's commentary is a testimony to his attempt to combine philology and antiquarianism with his broad scientific interest. It contrasts again with Hoffmann's emphasis on the wretched state of the human condition and the physical world.

The treatment of the book of Job, then, becomes symbolic for the character of both men and how they viewed the natural world. On one side stands the reclusive Hoffmann, who, although he barely owned any books, displayed all the symptoms of a solitary and socially inept hermit who had no manifest interest in nature and science. On the other side is the sociable Reimarus, who had the best libraries at his fingertips but was far from a bookish person. During his travels in Holland, he had been fascinated by the cutting of peat²²¹ and mesmerized by the magnetic demonstrations that the Dutch physicist

²¹⁶ Lucian Müller, *Geschichte der klassischen Philologie in den Niederlanden* (Leipzig, 1869), 15–23.

²¹⁷ On Hemsterhuis, see David Ruhnkenius, *Elogium Tiberii Hemsterhusii*, ed. H. Nikitinski (Munich and Leipzig, 2006); also Müller, *Geschichte der klassischen Philologie*, 74–82.

²¹⁸ On Wesseling, see “Wesseling, Peter,” in Zedlers *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 55 (Halle, 1748), 827–28.

²¹⁹ On Haverkamp, see Müller, *Geschichte der klassischen Philologie*, 46.

²²⁰ See Ernst Mayr, “Geleitwort,” in Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Thiere, hauptsächlich über ihre Kunsttriebe*, ed. Jürgen von Kempiski (Göttingen, 1982), 9.

²²¹ Reimarus, “Travel Diary Fragment,” 26: “D[er] holländische torft wird aus kostigter, schlammiger, u[nd] morastigererde gemacht, welche auf das feste Land aufgeschüttet,

and mathematician Nicolaas Hartsoeker (1656–1725)²²² often performed for his visitors.²²³ As a professor in Hamburg, he pleaded for a more active and hands-on approach to language instruction,²²⁴ where concrete objects and the natural surroundings became an integral part of the lesson, thus already anticipating the agenda of Basedow's *Philanthropinum*.²²⁵ He found joy and tranquility in nature, strolling through his garden, possibly even with his dog,²²⁶ and planting flowers and herbs. He delighted in his exchanges with Peter Hinrich Tesdorpf III (1712–1778),²²⁷ a retired merchant and a distant relative of his from Lübeck, whose cabinet of natural marvels from his journeys around the globe fascinated him.²²⁸

Not surprisingly, then, the interests of both Hoffmann and Reimarus diverge again when it comes to the natural world and the beautiful description of cosmology in the last three chapters of Job. Whereas Hoffmann views the Leviathan as typhoon, the mythical creature, which, as the source and sum of all evil, “repeatedly clashes with the forces of divine grace”²²⁹ and is

getrocknet, und alsdann abgestochen wird, ich habe probiret, das e. solche torft über 24 stunden feuer halten kann.”

- ²²² On Hartsoeker, see Catherine Abou-Nemeh, *Nicolas Hartsoeker's System of Nature: Physics by Conjecture and Optics by Design in Early Modern Europe* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2012); also Catherine Abou-Nemeh, “The Natural Philosopher and the Microscope: Nicolas Hartsoeker Unravels Nature's 'Admirable Oeconomy,'” *History of Science* 51 (2013), 1–32.
- ²²³ Reimarus, “Travel Diary Fragment,” 31–32: “Er [Hartsoeker] zeigte uns e[inen] Magneten, der kugel rund gemacht war, ohngefehr 2/3 schuh im diametro, konte 200 lb. ziehen, wenn er e[ine] nadel in der hand über dessen polen hielte, richtete s[ich] dieselbe in der hand perpendiculariter in die höhe [...].”
- ²²⁴ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *De optima ratione discendi docendique elementa linguae latinae*, in *Kleine gelehrte Schriften: Vorstufen zur Apologie*, ed. Schmidt-Biggemann, 351–69.
- ²²⁵ Jürgen Overhoff, “Johann Bernhard Basedow als Hauslehrer auf Borghorst,” *Jahrbuch für Historische Bildungsforschung* 8 (2002), 171–72.
- ²²⁶ See Almut Spalding and Paul Spalding, “Living in the Enlightenment: The Reimarus Household Accounts of 1728–1780,” in *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment*, ed. Mulsow, 201–29.
- ²²⁷ See Oscar L. Tesdorpf, *Die Geschichte des Tesdorpf'schen Geschlechts bis 1920* (Munich, 1921), 66–80.
- ²²⁸ Carl Mönckeberg, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und Johann Christian Edelmann* (Hamburg, 1867), 42.
- ²²⁹ Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 44: “[...] als des Ursprungs alles Bösen anzudeuten. Absonderlich wurde diesen Typhon zugeschrieben, daß er die Natur, insbesondere die Lüfte vergifte, und immer wieder die göttlichen Gnaden-Kräfte

ultimately as Satan responsible for “all fear and torment,”²³⁰ Reimarus provides an analysis that is a little bit more entertaining and cheerful. For the most part, he becomes preoccupied with *De Leviathan Jobi*, the dissertation by Theodor Hase (1682–1731) in which the theologian from Bremen argued that the Leviathan was a massive toothed fish and not, as Bochart had suggested,²³¹ a crocodile.²³² In his dissertation, Hase recounted his eye-opening experience of a whaling ship returning to Bremen from the Arctic²³³ with such a monstrosity of a beast that the imagery of Leviathan immediately came to his mind.²³⁴ The creature, which had been killed in the Barents Sea, measured approximately seventy feet,²³⁵ exceeding the common catch of the whalers in length by about twenty feet.²³⁶ Unlike common whales, which had baleen plates to filter food, this monster had an arsenal of impressive and razor-sharp teeth that were, however, “not unlike those of humans” in their arrangement.²³⁷ According to Hase, this creature’s habitat extended beyond the waters of the Arctic and it

streite. Alles was schädlich sowohl in den Säfftten und Seelen menschlicher Leiber, als auch in den Lüftten über der Erde, ward diesem Typhon als Urheber beygemessen.”

²³⁰ Ibid., 953: “[...] so ist Leviathan der Ursprung aller Angst und Quaal.”

²³¹ Samuel Bochart, *Hierozoicon sive Bipertitum opus de Animalibus S. Scripturae [...]* (Frankfurt, 1675), pars II, 770–95. Bochart argued that the Hebrew term לְבִתָּן was a synonym of לְבַיִלֵּן.

²³² Theodor Hase, *De Leviathan Jobi et Ceto Jonae Disquisitio* (Bremen, 1723).

²³³ The term *Grönland* [Greenland] is misleading. The best whaling grounds were usually between Jan Mayen Island and Spitsbergen. See Berend Harke Feddersen and Wolfgang Asbach, *Der historische Walfang der Nordfriesen* (Husum, 1991), 32.

²³⁴ Theodor Hase, *De Leviathan Jobi*, 3: “Hujus rei documentum haud leve superiori aestate (a. MDCCXXI.) exstitit, quando una xxv. Navium, quae a civibus meis in mare Hyperboreum, quod GROENLANDIAM alluit, piscatum balaenas allegatae fuerant. Vaegrandis alicujus, ac insoliti prorsus piscis, quem inter altos undarum frigore duratarum montes non sine Herculeo labore necaverant, exuvias ad nos apportavit. Ego, ut, quae de illo per ora vulgi circumferebantur, intellexi, ut in eas dilapsus fui cogitationes, hanc illam marinam esse belluam, quam sub nomine LEVIATHANIS magnificis adeo verbis describere apud Jobum capitibus XL. Inde a commate vicesimo & XLI [...].”

²³⁵ Ibid., 6: “Piscis illius, quem nautae nostri sub gradu circiter latitudinis septimo & septuagesimo cum semis jugularunt, magnitudo fuit pedum circiter LXX.”

²³⁶ Ibid., 7: “Unde constat, eos magnitudine aut anteire, aut aequare saltim vulgares baleanas, quae raro ultra pedes quinquaginta extenduntur, quamquam & sint, qui in longe majorem molem excrescant.”

²³⁷ Ibid., 8: “Os ejus non tam crassis grandibusque munitum est labii, quibus gaudent balaenae, illas autem laminas longas, quae in balaenae ore magna copia reperiuntur, vulgo Baarden vocant, heic frustra quaeviseris [...]. Dentibus autem consitum est ferratis, grandibus, acutis, dentibus humanis non prorsus assimilibus [...].”

was “by all means no stranger to the Red Sea”,²³⁸ and since this was just about the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone, Hase proclaims that the same beast was also responsible for the biblical Jonah’s agonizing three days.²³⁹

The creature that engendered so much excitement in Hase was most likely a cachalot or sperm whale, which does not have baleen plates, but does indeed roam most ocean waters. Since the whaling ships usually processed the cadaver at sea, it was unlikely that Hase saw more than just its jawbone, and he had to rely on the recollections of the homecoming crew.²⁴⁰ Whaling was undoubtedly a dangerous business, but add to that the cock-and-bull tales of the whalers and the creature may indeed have turned into something quite horrifying. Much of Hase’s narrative, however, may not have sounded too unfamiliar to Reimarus. Each year around Easter, the whaling ships left Hamburg, soon to return with barrels of whale blubber. All Reimarus needed to do was stroll down to the banks of the Elbe River, where the returning ships unloaded their cargo and the blubber was heated to produce train oil. The German traveler Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach describes this process quite vividly in his recollections of his visit to Hamburg.²⁴¹

But Reimarus does not seem convinced by Hase’s argument that the Leviathan was a member of the *odontoceti* family since, according to Scripture,²⁴² the Leviathan could not be domesticated like Lesbia’s sparrow in Catullus’s poem;²⁴³ Reimarus is therefore certain that Hase’s theory must be wrong:

²³⁸ Ibid., 39: “In ipso etiam sinu Arabico non prorsus peregrinum esse suo loco ostendetur pluribus.”

²³⁹ Ibid., 3: “Pariter, cum, quae de horribilis magnitudinis ingluvie, ex qua inspectantibus, mirantibusque nautis ingentem alium pisces evomuit, narrabantur, audirem, cogitare coepi, anne hic ejusdem quoque generis cetus fuerit, quem post trium circiter dierum in ejus ventre moram divinum vatem JONAM, in terram ejecisse sacrarum literarum monumenta docent. On medieval and early modern debates about the identity of the לִוְתָן גָּדֵל, see most recently Bernd Roling, *Physica sacra: Wunder, Naturwissenschaft und historischer Schriftsinn zwischen Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Leiden, 2013), 321–402.

²⁴⁰ See also the firsthand account of Christian Bullen, *Eines seefahrenden Journal oder Tagregister, Was auff der Schiffahrt nach der Nordt-See und denen Insuln Groenlandt und Spitsbergen täglich vorgefallen im Jahr Christi 1667. Worin ausfuhrlich der Walfischfang, deren Arth und Natur, auch andere in der See vorgefallene wunderbare Sachen eygentlich und natürlich beschrieben werden* (Bremen, 1668).

²⁴¹ Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland, Zwyeter Teil* (Frankfurt, 1753), 84.

²⁴² Job 40:29 (BHS): “Will you play with it as with a bird, or will you put it on a leash for your girls?”; see Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 468.

²⁴³ Catullus, *Carmen* 2: “Passer, deliciae meae puellae, quicum ludere, quem in sinu tenere, cui primum digitum dare appetenti et acris solet incitare morsus [...].”

But the comparison of the Leviathan with a bird illustrates that it could not have been a toothed fish. How difficult would it be to say about a monstrous fish, which could never live on land, that no maiden could play with it like a pet bird?²⁴⁴

Just imagine: a playful Lesbia relaxing on the banks of the Jordan River, playing with a sperm whale on a leash. That just seemed too outlandish to be true. For Reimarus, the Leviathan could be nothing other than a crocodile. It takes him little effort to find the weakness in Hase's argument. According to Scripture, the Leviathan's "pride are the channels of his shield shut up tight as with a seal."²⁴⁵ Since Hase concluded that the *cetus dentatus* had no scales, he was forced to find an alternative explanation for this passage. So he had interpreted it as a reference to the verse before, which described the Leviathan's teeth.²⁴⁶ To Reimarus, however, this did not seem very plausible:

Mister Hase is hard-pressed here, because the toothed fish does not have any scales. To save himself, he pulls this description together with half of the preceding verse [...]. But the usage among the poets, who call the teeth of an animal weapons, does not justify that the shields may also refer to its teeth.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Hoffmannn, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 995 (e): "Wirst du ihn zahm machen, und mit ihm als einem Vogel spielen können? וְתַקְשִׁרָנו לְנֶעֱרֹתִיךְ aut ligabis eum puellis tuis i.e. alligatum funiculo dabis puellis tuis; verbum praegnans. Oder ihn an einem Faden gebunden deinen Mädchens [sic] geben, sich damit zu erlustigen? Passer deliciae meae puellae quicum ludere. Catullus, init [...]. Allein aus eben der Vergleichung des Leviathans mit solchem Vogel erhellet, daß kein Zahn-Fisch könne gemeynet seyn. Denn wie hart wäre es nicht von einem ungeheuren Fisch der nimmer aufs Land kommen kan zu sagen, daß kein Mädchen mit ihm als wie einen Vogel spielen könne?"

²⁴⁵ Job 41:7 (BHS).

²⁴⁶ Hase, *De Leviathan Jobi*, 170–72: "Hinc illi, qui balaena cogitarunt, magna se implicari difficultate animadverterunt. Squamis enim instructas esse nemo vidit [...]. Et sane fateor hanc rem meum animum diu ancipitem tenuisse, quod in eo pisci, quem tracto, squamas invenire potui nusquam [...]. Quid enim, quae so te, Lector, hic loci de SQUAMIS legitur? Vocantur illae Ebraice קְשָׁפָחוֹת vel סְמִימִים, sed nihil quidquam heic tale reperio [...]. Ita, ut nisi facto ingenti faltu omnem turbare velimus saepientissimi Oratoris ordinem, summaque imis miscere, heic loci non de cute, nedum squamis, sed de oris DENTIBUS cogitandum sit."

²⁴⁷ Hoffmannn, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 996 (o): "Herr Hasaeus hat hier seine Noth, weil der Zahn-Fisch keine Schuppen hat. Also nimmer er um sich zu retten, die Hälffte des vorigen Verses mit zu dieser Beschreibung [...]. Allein die Loca der Poeten, da sie die

Reimarus, however, has no problem using the ancient military as a source of inspiration. The structure of the skin of the crocodile was, according to Reimarus, similar to the *testudo*, or turtle formation, of the Roman soldiers, which Lipsius had so meticulously described in his *Poliorceticon*.²⁴⁸ The soldiers would be layering their shields over their heads and on the sides to protect themselves from arrows and missiles.²⁴⁹ The description of the creature becomes more outlandish: “Its sneezes flash forth light and its eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn. From its mouth go flaming torches [...].”²⁵⁰ Reimarus still does not second-guess his initial classification of the species. He argues that ancient poets in general, such as Silius or Ovid, often resorted to this kind of language whenever they referred to animals. According to Reimarus, such figurative language is not even completely out of place here, because crocodiles tend to “hold their breath under water for such a long time that they have to release it afterwards much more forcefully, as Bochart had shown.”²⁵¹

But Reimarus has also some hands-on advice for future daring explorers of the banks of the Nile and Jordan. He points out that the best way to escape from an attacking crocodile was to “run to-and-fro, because [this creature] was unable to make quick turns.”²⁵² It seems questionable to what extent Hoffmann would have embraced this advice. He most certainly would not have liked the reference to Catullus. The lifelong misogamist avoided wine, women, and song and must have had little respect for the frivolous Roman poet.²⁵³

Zähne der Thiere, Waffen nennen, wollen es noch nicht ausmachen, daß durch Schilde auch können Zähne verstanden werden.”

²⁴⁸ Justus Lipsius, *Poliorceticon sive de machinis, tormentis, telis libri quinque* in *Opera Omnia* (Antwerp, 1637), t. 3, 270–73.

²⁴⁹ Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 996 (o): “Es ist mir fast gar zu klar, daß auf die Art der Schilde gezielt werde, da die Soldaten bey Belagerung einer Stadt die Schilde so dichte über den Kopf musten an einander halten, daß kein Spieß, Pfeil oder Schleuderstein durchdringen konnte.”

²⁵⁰ Job 41:18–19.

²⁵¹ Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 997 (q): “Dies ist, sag ich, die Poetische Beschreibung [...]. Es reden die Poeten so von dem Schnauben andrer Thiere. Silius L. VI. v. 242. *Frenoque teneri impatiens crebros exspirat naribus ignes*. Ovid. Metam. VII. 356. *Spiratque e pectore flamma [...]*. Allein bei dem Crocodil und Hippopotamo ist solches etwas eigentlich wahr, indem dieselben unter Wasser die Luft so lange zurück halten, und folglich hernach desto stärker von sich blasen, wie Bochartus zeiget.”

²⁵² Ibid., 998 (x): “Es wird angemerkt, daß man dem Crocodil nicht besser entkommen könne, als mit hin und her lauffen, weil der Crocodil sich sobald nicht wenden kan.”

²⁵³ See “Nachricht,” 635: “Von allem Umgange mit Frauenzimmer suchte er sich möglichst zu entfernen. Sein Trieb gieng in diesen Stücke so weit, daß er von keiner Heyrat etwas wissen wollte [...]”

His analysis of the Leviathan passage in Job 40:29 sounds slightly different. Accordingly for Hoffmann, Leviathan symbolizes Satan, whom God has tied down like “an evil raptor” to the spirit world. Although God laughs about Satan’s desire to soar, the latter escapes from time to time and spreads his evil seeds into the world. Since this is necessary to maintain a perfect balance between good and evil, God occasionally loosens the demon’s leash, but prevents him from soaring too high and ravaging too much.²⁵⁴ If this somewhat atypical interpretation seems slightly peculiar, it makes perfectly clear how these two authors approached Scripture. For the “moralizing apostle” Hoffmann, Scripture is an encrypted treasure chest of divine wisdom. Although a correct understanding of the literal meaning is essential, more profound truth lies beyond and can often only be retrieved by looking beyond one particular passage. Reimarus is only peripherally concerned with scriptural theology. He is more interested in exploring biblical *realia* in the context of the ancient world in general. But his tools are much more versatile, and he has no concern about profaning Scripture by drawing on a rich spectrum of classical and contemporary scholarship. Natural history was not yet part of the school curriculum, and whatever Reimarus knew was due to his own interest and initiative.²⁵⁵

Although Reimarus most likely had never seen a living crocodile, one should not automatically conclude that his knowledge would have been exclusively bookish, for that would mean underestimating the influence Reimarus’s surroundings had on his worldview. Hamburg offered plenty of alternatives for a hands-on exploration. Reimarus probably also visited his relative Peter Hinrich Tesdorpf in Lübeck and marveled at his impressive cabinet of curiosities. Among its most precious pieces were the mounted heads of a crocodile and of a hippopotamus, the “true and genuine Behemoth [...] from Job,” and the jewel of all, a preserved *Trochilus Colubris*, more commonly known

²⁵⁴ Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 956: “Im Reiche der Geister ist Satanas wie ein flüchtiger böser Raub-Vogel, immer von Gott angebunden. Gott lachet seiner, wenn er höher als sein Strick reichet, fliegen will [...] bey der geringsten Gelegenheit aber will der Lügen-Teufel doch entwischen. Allein Gottes Macht holet ihn zurück in seine Schranken. Er lässt ihm dann und wann zur Ausübung seiner Gerichte, den Strick ein wenig schiessen, allein er holet ihn bald wieder an, spielt mit ihm und macht sein ausgestreutes Gifft zur Erhaltung der Dinge dienen [...].”

²⁵⁵ Johann Albert Hinrich Reimarus, *Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst aufgesetzt* (Hamburg, 1814), 6: “An einen öffentlichen Unterricht in der Naturgeschichte ward damahls noch nicht gedacht. Daß aber mein Vater darauf achtet, hat er schon in der kleinen vorläufigen Abhandlung, de Instinctu brutorum existentis Dei, ejusdemque sapientissimi, indice. Wismariae 1725. 4. welche er, da er noch Rector in Wismar war, herausgegeben hat, gezeiget. Er hat also schon frühe den Trieb zur Naturbetrachtung in mir erregt.”

under the name of ruby-throated hummingbird.²⁵⁶ Whenever Tesdorpf was in Hamburg, Reimarus allowed him access to his library so that he could get his hands on the anatomical works by Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697–1770) or books on birds, insects, and other critters by Mark Catesby (1682–1749).²⁵⁷

Eighteenth-century Hamburg was a vibrant port city with a thriving cultural and economic life, a German Amsterdam, and Reimarus was no passive observer on the sidelines.²⁵⁸ He consumed an inordinate amount of tea,²⁵⁹ smoked tobacco,²⁶⁰ and would occasionally stroll down to the Elbe River to enjoy a beer or a meal at the *Baumhaus*, a local inn that was famous for its dried cod.²⁶¹ During these strolls, he may have paused a minute to watch the returning ships unload their cargo or engage in conversations with fellow citizens about the news of the day. He most likely had set foot into a sugar refinery at least once, which had become by then one of Hamburg's most important industries, and he may also have shown some interest in calico printing.²⁶² Through his mentors Fabricius and Wolf, Reimarus was closely affiliated with the first Patriotic Society of 1724, and he would habitually organize social gatherings of a diverse circle of scholars, tradesmen, architects, and scientists at his own house before he became one of the founding members of the new Patriotic Society of 1765.²⁶³ As we have seen before, Reimarus had already

²⁵⁶ Oscar L. Tesdorpf, *Die Geschichte des Tesdorpf'schen Geschlechts*, 70.

²⁵⁷ Letter Peter Hinrich Tesdorpf to Reimarus, 26 July 1745, StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 23.

²⁵⁸ Very insightful about life in the Reimarus household is Almut Spalding's excellent article "Die Haushaltbücher der Familie Reimarus als Zeugen ihrer Beziehungen zur Bildungselite, zu Bediensteten und Dienstleistenden," in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger and Sandra Richter (Berlin, 2012), 291–301.

²⁵⁹ Spalding and Spalding, "Living in the Enlightenment," 221–22.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 222.

²⁶¹ See Jonas Ludwig von Heß, *Hamburg, topographisch, politisch und historisch beschrieben*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Hamburg, 1811), 388: "[Das Baumhaus] ward 1662 von Hans Hamelau [...] erbaut [...]. Es wird von Einheimischen wegen der vielen Sorten fremder Biere, die hier zu haben sind [...] häufig besucht [...]. Das Haus ist berühmt für die schmackhafte Zubereitung des Stockfisches, und im Herbst werden hier Stockfischmahlzeiten gehalten [...]. Untem im Haus hängt ein ausgestopfter Grönländer mit seinem Canoe, einige Crocodille, Meerkrebse u. dergl."

²⁶² Mary Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers: Hamburg, 1712–1830* (New York, 1990), 39–47.

²⁶³ Franklin Kopitzsch, "Die Hamburgische Gesellschaft zur Beförderung der Künste und nützlichen Gewerbe (Patriotische Gesellschaft von 1765) im Zeitalter der Aufklärung," in *Deutsche patriotische und gemeinnützige Gesellschaften*, ed. Rudolf Vierhaus (Munich, 1980), 75; also Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 89–93.

shown interest in science at a very early stage, while he was on his *peregrinatio academica* in Holland. It should therefore not surprise us that this interest also surfaces at various points in his Job commentary.

Right at the beginning of God's whirlwind speech, even before providing illustrative detail about his creation, God presents himself as the supreme architect, who had "shut in the sea with doors when it broke forth from the womb."²⁶⁴ Several commentators had noted the allusion to labor and child delivery, especially since the term יָצַא [to burst forth] is used metaphorically in Micah 4:10 to allude to just that.²⁶⁵ The compilers of the Berleburger Bible,²⁶⁶ for example, saw this as a reference to the deluge when "the water broke forth like a newborn from its mother's womb,"²⁶⁷ and Johann Heinrich Michaelis pointed out that the "creation of the waters and the sea was compared here to the birth of a human."²⁶⁸ But Reimarus was not interested in a midwife's tale, at least not here:

Whoever has seen sluices will understand this description. There is also no doubt that such things existed in most ancient times, since it is well known that the Nile in Egypt, as well as the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, was conducted in channels throughout the entire country, which would have been of little use without the utilization of sluices.²⁶⁹

From Reimarus's perspective, this interpretation must have seemed perfectly reasonable. Since the author of the book of Job presented God in the previous

²⁶⁴ Job 38:8 [אִישׁ בְּדָלְתִים יִשְׁאֵל בְּנִיחוֹ מְרֻחָם יָצַא]; see Gordis, p. 436.

²⁶⁵ Micah 4:10: "Twist and groan/bring forth [יָצַא], O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor [...]."

²⁶⁶ Martin Brecht, "Die Berleburger Bibel. Hinweise zu ihrem Verständnis," in Martin Brecht, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Stuttgart, 1997), vol. 2, 369–408.

²⁶⁷ *Der Heiligen Schrift und zwar Alten Testaments Dritter Theil: Nämlich die Bücher Hiob, die Psalmen Davids [...]* (Berlenburg, 1730), 133: "[...] als wann Es aus Mutterleib gekommen wäre: aber auch als ein neugebohrnes Kind [...]."

²⁶⁸ Michaelis, *Uberiorum Adnotationum Philologico-Exegeticarum*, 497–98: "Ut sic creatio maris & aquarum, quam in hoc versu describit Dominus cum hominis nativitate comparetur [...]."

²⁶⁹ Hoffmannn, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 913 (c): "Wer Schleusen gesehen hat, wird diese Beschreibung verstehen. Und es ist wohl kein Zweifel, daß man dergleichen in ganzt alten Zeiten gehabt, sitemhal bekannt ist daß sowohl der Nil in Aegypten, als auch der Euphrat in Mesopotamien, mit Canälen durch das gantze Land geleitet worden ist, welches ohne den Gebrauch der Schleusen keinen Nutzen würde gehabt haben."

verse as an architect,²⁷⁰ what could be more sensible than stressing God's powers of taming the primeval forces of nature as the most excellent engineer in hydrotechnology?

The image of God as architect brought out the Patriot in Reimarus; citizen of a port city, he was quite familiar with the forces of nature and how they could be harnessed. The Hamburg of his time had plenty of waterways, canals, and three or four major flood- or water-gates,²⁷¹ and Reimarus did not need to look at the sketch of a sluice in Johann Vogel's *Die moderne Baukunst* (1708)²⁷² in order to understand how they worked.

But his confidence that such marvels of human ingenuity existed in the ancient world was based more on conjecture than on hard evidence. Although the Younger Pliny proposes the use of a sluice in one of his letters to Trajan,²⁷³ it would have been much harder for Reimarus to find such evidence in regard to ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia, especially since the Greek term καταρραχτήρ [cataract; waterfall] only rarely carried this connotation. But this assumption was far from daring, and his visit to Amsterdam and strolls around town must have suggested the obvious: any society that was heavily dependent on access to water had to be technically ingenious in order to survive. Channels and waterways throughout Egypt would have been useless unless they could be regulated.

²⁷⁰ Job 38:4: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Reimarus comments on this verse as follows: "Gott ist ein Bau-Meister der gantzen Welt. *Architectus tanti operis*, Cic., Der aber dabey weder Rathgeber noch Gehülfen gebraucht, sondern alles allein durch seinen Willen und Wort gemacht hat [...]. Die Vorstellung der Schöpfung ist hier und im Folgenden von der Anlegung eines Gebäudes genommen. Denn wenn der Grund dazu soll gelegt werden, so muß das Maaß des Hauses nach der Länge, Breite und Höhe erstlich bestimmet, oder auf einen Grund-Riß gebracht seyn. Darnach wird ein solcher Platz mit der Meß-Ruthen abgemessen; man fängt alsdenn an, daß Fundament von Mauer-Werck oder grossen Steinen tief in die Erde einzusencken, und dazu wird der erste Eck-Stein mit vieler Solennitet gelegt"; see Hoffmann, *Neue Erklärung des Buchs Hiob*, 913 (b).

²⁷¹ Jonas Ludwig von Heß, *Hamburg, topographisch, politisch und historisch beschrieben*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Hamburg, 1810), 137–39.

²⁷² Johann Vogel, *Die moderne Baukunst: mit Vorstellung accurater Modellen, firtrefflicher Dach-Werken [...] wie auch verschiedenen Arten Brücken, Schleusen, Dämmen, Wasser- und Hand-Mühlen [...]* (Hamburg, 1708).

²⁷³ *Epidictae*, lib. 10, epp. 61,4: "Enimvero, si placeat fossam longius ducere et altius pressam mari aquae nec in flumen, sed in ipsum mare emittere, repercussus maris servabit et reprimet, quidquid e lacu veniet. Quorum si nihil nobis loci natura praestaret, expeditum tamen erat cataractis aquae cursum temperare."

Reimarus's technological erudition extends beyond this single snapshot. Starting with his *peregrinatio academica*, it surfaces continuously throughout his work and life. His auction catalogue is both testimony to and proof of his active pursuit of scientific interests.²⁷⁴ It lists a large arsenal of works not only on botany, the mathematical sciences (including applied mathematics), medicine, and mineralogy, but also on commerce and navigation, hunting and dendrology, not to speak of all the theological and philological works. That this is no coincidence is illustrated by the outline of a lecture that Reimarus wrote toward the end of his life. It remained unpublished until a few years later when one of his most talented students, the economist Johann Georg Büsch, decided to publish a greatly enlarged version of it. This lecture serves as an almost symbolic reflection of Reimarus's scholarly cosmos. It is designed as a broad survey of all the historical, philosophical, and mathematical sciences and presents natural history with an emphasis on the experimental and applied sciences along side anthropocentric universal history with its related disciplines. This perspective allows Reimarus to be viewed as a bridge between the world of the humanists, with its focus on philology and antiquarianism,²⁷⁵ and the curiosity and experimental spirit of the later Enlightenment, which would peak with the generation of the "lunar men,"²⁷⁶ the generation of Reimarus's son, the physicist Johann Albert Hinrich Reimarus, a passionate advocate for the installation of lightning rods on church towers²⁷⁷ and close friend of Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802).²⁷⁸

Reimarus's Job commentary is a reflection of this kind of learning. It illustrates how he fuses effortlessly the philology and antiquarianism of scholars such as Jean Le Clerc or Grotius with an interest in the applied sciences. Although he does not show any of Le Clerc's inclination toward textual

²⁷⁴ See Introduction above, note 68.

²⁷⁵ This is not to say that earlier generations of scholars did not have an interest in scientific inquiry. A case in point would be the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the epitome of the German polyhistor.

²⁷⁶ Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men: Five Men Whose Curiosity Changed the World* (New York, 2003).

²⁷⁷ Johann Albert Hinrich Reimarus, *Die Ursache des Einschlagen vom Blitze, nebst dessen natürlichen Abwendung von unsren Gebäuden, aus zuverlässigen Erfahrungen von Wetterschlägen vor Augen gelegt* (Hamburg, 1768); on the subject, see Bernd Hamacher, "Der Streit um die himmlische Herrschaft. Der erste deutsche Blitzableiter in Hamburg 1770," in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, ed. Steiger and Richter, 337–47.

²⁷⁸ Desmond King-Hele, *Doctor of Revolution: The Life and Genius of Erasmus Darwin* (London, 1977), 31–32.

emendation, he also has no reservation about incorporating profane sources into his analysis. But he stretches beyond Le Clerc by drawing parallels to the world of applied and experimental sciences. This approach is already a radical departure from the *analogia fidei* of Lutheran faithfuls. In his Job commentary, however, Reimarus does not yet use this erudition against the biblical text, but he uses his knowledge parallel to it. That this would change only a few years later is certainly no secret anymore.

“One Repays a Teacher Badly if One Remains Only a Pupil”
(Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*)

When Reimarus and Jean Le Clerc met again a few years later, the predicaments were markedly different. By then, Reimarus had evidently absorbed Le Clerc’s work to a greater extent than the latter could have wished and morphed completely, though secretly, into heterodoxy. Gone was the reservation about Le Clerc’s profanation of Scripture. This imaginary encounter between the two scholars “occurred” on the banks of the Red Sea, where God had so miraculously provided a dry passage for his chosen people to save it from the chariots and horsemen of the Egyptian pharaoh. As an appendix to his Pentateuch commentary, Le Clerc had written a small piece on the event, in which he showed against all odds that the crossing of the Red Sea was by no means as miraculous as generally assumed.²⁷⁹ He attributed this mistaken belief to an “excessive love of prophetic signs,” according to which it is falsely believed that “God changed the order of nature habitually.”²⁸⁰ Le Clerc argues that a closer examination of the incident reveals that the Israelites’ crossing was entirely plausible and did not require supernatural forces to carry them over.²⁸¹

279 See, for example, Johann Ludwig Stumpf, *סָוִף בְּקֻעַת יָם סִזְרִים Miraculosa* (Giessen, undated), 11: “Certe non potest non sinistri ominis haberis labor ille, quando tam anxie id ostendere satagit, quomodo intra 4. vel 5. horarum spatium transire omnes potuerint [...]. Imo vero certum est, quicquid obvertatur tantum agmen intra tant illum tempus traduci non potuisse.”

280 Jean Le Clerc, “Dissertatio de Maris Idumaei Trajectione,” in *Joannis Clerici Commentarius in Mosis Prophetae Libros Quinque* (Tübingen, 1733), 613: “Prodigiorum amor nimius non raro, ut Deus ordinem naturae consuetum mutasse perperam crederetur, effecit.”

281 Le Clerc has a very clear concept of what would constitute a miracle: “Duo iterum sunt rerum genera, quae extra ordinem Deus ipse operatur. Aliae ejusmodi sunt, ut non possint naturalibus causis, hoc est vi humanae [...] tribui [...]. Aliae in se spectatae possent quidem effectus naturalium causarum haberi, qualis est vehementior ventus

According to Le Clerc, history proves that there are plenty of instances where skilled leadership took advantage of the forces of nature to overcome sheer insurmountable obstacles. To these belongs Alexander's passing of Mount Climax as well as Scipio's conquest of Carthage.²⁸² The natural conditions that the Israelites encountered certainly played to their advantage. At the point of their passage, the gulf was no wider than two Roman miles,²⁸³ around 1.6 miles, and it was thus no major obstacle even for such a myriad of people to cross within just a few hours. Le Clerc also has a solution for the apparent conflict between the magic of the strong wind, which pushed the sea back throughout the night, and the Israelites' tight schedule to make it across before the morning in order to be able to watch the spectacle of drowning Egyptians:

The Israelites did unavoidably not flee in a long military column. After the wind dried a very wide space, they could cross with a broad front, just like the Egyptians who were chasing them; if only a few [Egyptians] had advanced at the same time, the entire army could not have drowned, because the following ranks would have been severed from the leading portion of the long column.²⁸⁴

[...]. Hos possunt gignere causae naturae, & saepe gignunt [...]. Si, cum nullus ordine Naturae oritur esset ventus [...], Deus singulari voluntate oriri ventum [...] haec miracula erunt." Though overall skeptical, Le Clerc has created a loophole which does not entirely exclude the possibility of a miraculous passage. For Le Clerc, however, the true miracle would in fact have been if God had revealed the impending events to Moses in detail beforehand: "Si Deus revelasse haec Mosi dicatur, quod volumus habemus; sola enim revelatio sumnum erit miraculum." This fully agrees with Le Clerc's overall high esteem for the prophetic books of the Bible. See Jean Le Clerc, *Dissertatio de Maris Idumaei Trajectione*, 620. See also Reventlow, "Bibelexegese als Aufklärung," 17.

²⁸² Jean Le Clerc, *Dissertatio de Maris Idumaei Trajectione*, 621: "Hinc quantum sit discrimen inter hunc transitum Alexandri per littus Pamphylii maris, & sinus Erythraei trajectionem satis liquet [...]. Non minus differt ab Hebraeorum trajectu Publii Africani militum ad Carthaginis murum accessus."

²⁸³ Ibid., 615: "Primum est eum sinum qua desinit, arctissimum esse, ut omnes testantur, qui de eo egerunt [...]. Haec circiter duobus milliaribus a se invicem distant."

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 615: "[...] Israelitas ordine militari & longo agmine necesse non habuisse fugere. Latissimo spatio vento exsiccato, lata fronte trajicere potuerunt, quemadmodum tentarunt post eos Aegyptii; totus enim exercitus Aegyptius submersus non fuisset si pauci simul processissent, cum longi agminis postrema acies multum fuisset a fronte abfutura."

Such a formation would allow for a much swifter progress. Apart from that, continues Le Clerc, the Israelites must have started their transit once the main body of water had been pushed away. The Bible's וַיָּבֹא בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בֶּתֶזֶק [And the Israelites walked through the midst of the Sea on dry ground]²⁸⁵ should not be understood too literally. Of course, there were still deeper patches and puddles, but בַּיבְשָׁה [on dry ground] means ultimately that "there is no longer any water on top of the ocean floor."²⁸⁶ The reeds, reeds, and the mud on the ocean floor were then, according to Le Clerc, what sealed the Egyptians' fate. This was certainly no easy terrain for the Egyptian chariots and horsemen. When some of them even crashed they added to the amalgam of natural obstacles for those following behind them, making the Egyptian defeat ultimately inevitable.²⁸⁷

Not surprisingly, the Reimarus of the *Apologie* was not impressed. With all due respect for Le Clerc's erudition, his analysis, beginning with the selective use of sources, seemed distinctly biased:

In the case of Le Clerc, the reason for this defective and perverted presentation is not ignorance, a lack of knowledge, and the like, but a gross bias. But could anything more amateurish in favor of the passage of the Israelites have been brought forward by an otherwise very skilled man?²⁸⁸

According to Reimarus, Le Clerc had based his analysis solely on a passage in Diodorus Siculus, who had estimated the distance between the two shores to be around sixteen *stadia* [~1.6 miles]. But since many other ancient writers, such as Strabo, Arrian, and Pliny, provided a far larger number, sixty *stadia* to be precise [~ 6 miles], Le Clerc should by all means have known better:

²⁸⁵ Ex. 14:22.

²⁸⁶ Le Clerc, *Dissertatio de Maris Idumaei trajectione*, 618: "[...] neque enim hoc ita intelligendum, quasi ne humida quidem ac lutosa fuerit. *Sicca* dicitur humus, supra quam non sunt undae, opponiturque non ulgini, sed aquae [...]."

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 618–19: "Hisce sine dubio multum Aegyptiorum currus & equos tardari necesse fuit [...]. Fundum maris inaequale, rupibusque & fruticibus variis in locis asperum non facile curribus peragrabatur [...]. Eversi autem, aut fracti aliquot currus totum agmen turbabant, confusisque ordinibus, concitatisque quantum licebat equis, dum quisque antevertere alios nititur, lentius sine dubio exercitum procedere necesse fuit."

²⁸⁸ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 326: "Es ist hier bey Clerico nicht Unbedachtsamkeit, nicht Unwissenheit, Unbelesenheit und dergleichen, Ursache an der mangelhaften und verkehrten Vorstellung, sondern eine grobe Partheylichkeit. Konnte aber wohl was elenderes von einem sonst geschickten Manne zur Rettung des Israelitischen Durchgangs vorgebracht werden?"

I am also well aware of a passage in Diodorus Siculus, which calculates the width as sixteen stadia. But the passage is undoubtedly corrupt, because it disagrees with the unanimous judgment of all other ancient sources and the scribe could in his mind easily have confused sixteen and sixty ($\epsilon\xi\kappa\alpha\iota\delta\varepsilon\kappa\alpha$ and $\xi\xi\gamma\kappa\sigma\tau\alpha$), when he heard it. [Le Clerc] appears to have been not entirely unbiased if he bases his judgment upon this single corrupt passage in Diodorus and at the same time conceals the opposite views of all other ancient writers.²⁸⁹

This criticism would have been an especially painful slap in Le Clerc's face. Reimarus triumphs on Le Clerc's home turf. In the second volume of his *Ars critica*, Le Clerc had written extensively on exactly these kinds of mistakes where scribes accidentally wrote down what they happened to have in their heads or what they believed to have heard when a passage was dictated to them (Fig. 6).²⁹⁰ But Reimarus is not alone in his skepticism about the passage in Diodorus Siculus. Petrus Wesseling, the humanist from Utrecht, who would in 1750 provide Reimarus with valuable observations on his Cassius Dio, raised the same kind of doubts when he published his edition of the *Bibliotheca historicae*, which replaced the "tolerably correct" edition by the German humanist Lorenz Rhodomann (1546–1606)²⁹¹ from 1604, as Edward Harwood (1729–1794) noted,²⁹² as the new standard edition for years to come.²⁹³

289 Ibid., 318: "Ich weis auch wohl, daß eine Stelle bey dem Diodoro Siculo die Breite nur auf 16 Stadia rechnet. Aber die Stelle ist ohne Zweifel verdorben: weil sie wieder das einmühlige Zeugniß aller Alten läuft, und weil sechzehn mit sechzig ($\epsilon\xi\kappa\alpha\iota\delta\varepsilon\kappa\alpha$ mit $\xi\xi\gamma\kappa\sigma\tau\alpha$) leicht in Gedanken oder im Hören, von dem Abschreiber haben vertauscht. Le Clerc [...] scheinet nicht gar unpartheyisch gehandelt zu haben, wenn er sich auf diese einzige verdorbene Stelle des Diodori beruft, und die gegenseitigen Zeugnisse der Alten verschweigt."

290 "Certe cum qui scribit aliud agit, quod saepe potuit contingere, facile fit ut quae cogitat, non quae dictantur, scribat [...]. Scribentes enim non modo verba, sed etiam sensum adtendunt, & in longa scriptione, saepe fit ut sententiae ratio major habeatur, quam verborum. Si praesertim qui dictabant, lucri causa, quam maxime poterant festinarent, ut sine dubio saepe factum est; nihil mirum si voculae saepe minus necessariae a Scribentibus omittebantur, aut miscebantur synonymae": see Le Clerc, *Ars critica*, vol. 2, 88.

291 On Rhodomann, see Karl Heinrich Lange, *Laurentii Rhodomanni vita* (Lübeck, 1741).

292 Edward Harwood, *A View of the Various Editions of the Greek and Roman Classics* (London, 1775), 53.

293 Wesseling writes: "Περὶ ἔκκαιδεκά σταδίους. Vereor vehementer ut sani hi numeri sint: magno enim consensu veteres angustias sinus Arabici, quae circa Diren promontorium cognominemque urbem sunt, stadiorum LX. Faciunt, Strabo XVI. p. 114. Arrian. Peripl. Mar. Erythr. p. 155. Agathemer. I. 3. [...]" see *Diodori Siculi Bibliothecae Historicae Libri qui supersunt [...]* (Amsterdam, 1745), t. 1, 204, n. 85.

Diodor. Sec. lib. III. p. 170. ff. (120-121)

ο προβαγανισμούς οπόρων κόλπος δειπτό-
πιστας μὲν εἰς τὸν κατὰ αὐτὴν προπόλεαν κερη-
νεῖς ακαράς, τὸν οὐρανὸν πολλῶν πάντων
πολιτῶν σαράντα, τὸν πυχὸν τοῦ προσεισθέντον
τελείου ξαδεύεις τὰς ἀρχαῖς καὶ λεγόντων εἰκόνας.
ἔπος δὲ κατὰ τὸν τοῦ σόγην καὶ τὸν πυχὸν οπ-
τελεῖς τῆς ἵππαις σαράντα, ἥπος δὲ Πανα-
γίου πάντων πρὸς τὸν αἰραντόν τοις αὐτοῖς
παρεῖται νερὸν πλαγάνεις προστίθεται.

—

ο δὲ παράπολος αὐλόν τολμήσας λόγους
τοῦ εὐθύνοντος πατέρας, στρών γὰρ σιδηρόντων
τοξοτῶν, τοὺς δὲ πολὺς καὶ ἐργαζόντες
τοῖς πολεσταῖς θεοῖς Αἴγανος καὶ Κάρτεος
πατέρας τὴν δέξιαν θητεῖον ἐκπέμψας κατέ-
λοντο λόγους τὰ τίτλους τὸν Σάδαρταν Σόλαρ
πολλὰ πικρὰς ἀρπελοὺς ἔχοντας γένους, etc.

ib. p. 173.

(121)

Mare palestine ac canopum est, non alto-
us tribus origines, et tunc unde esse de-
prehenditur. Canum viros non apparet,
ille natura. Sed mafis algaes vel aquae
transparentes copia advenunt. Nauibus
impedit remigia inservit lous illa opor-
tunus est, quod ex longinquos fluctus non
dovolat; ubiqueque pessimum caput curvum
exhibet. Ad que elephantes transpor-
tant, tum profunditate carinae, tum
structura gravitate, magnis et atrocibus
nautas perculis involventur. Non va-
lo enim intus concitata velis
et ventorum impetu sub noctem eo com-
pulsa, nunc ad scopulos naufragia
fecerunt, nunc in isthos strinco-
ferunt, ut naves etiam interdum a
venis intrahant et innescantur
ita, ut inde nungiam emergetur.

FIGURE 6 Copied passage from Diodorus Siculus cited by Reimarus that discusses the width of the Red Sea at the Israelites' crossing point.

STA HH, 622-1 REIMARUS, 622:1: A 15: "NOTIZEN ZU DIODOR." COURTESY OF STAATSARCHIV HAMBURG

But even if the distance was as short as Le Clerc had assumed, Reimarus asserts, his analysis is nonetheless clouded by the desire to bring the Israelites swiftly across. Apart from the fact that it would have been impossible to position approximately three million people in a broad line along the coast ready to cross over, the pace Le Clerc assumes does not take the substantial number of disabled and elderly people into account, who must equally have been part of such a multitude, not to mention the cattle and carriages with their

belongings. Ancient scholars such as Strabo had already noted the extremely inaccessible terrain, and more recently, the sixteenth-century French traveler Pierre Belon (1517–1564) had concluded that “the frequent cliffs made a navigation [of this part of the Red Sea] very difficult and dangerous,”²⁹⁴ and there was obviously a reason for its name נָסָר יָם [Sea of Reeds], because of the many reeds and moss that grew in the muddy soil.²⁹⁵ Yet, Reimarus argues, Le Clerc had chosen to acknowledge these factors only when it was time for the Egyptians to meet their fate:

But once poor pharaoh must drown, [Le Clerc] includes the untraversable ocean floor. All of a sudden, there is deep mud in many places and quicksand, into which the wheels [of the chariots] sink [...]. The chariots collide [...], they crash on the cliffs, the wheels break, get turned upside down [...]. Did the wind carry all the sand and mud there? Did the cliffs and coral reefs grow during the last night watch, just like fungus?²⁹⁶

Reimarus's criticism is not entirely unjustified. If Le Clerc had shown the same rigor that he was advocating in his initial meeting with Reimarus and consistently applied it to the passage, he would have had to acknowledge the obvious discrepancies in the biblical account. In spite of his notoriety as a profaner, he was not putting his principles into practice with the same perseverance because he would have had to sacrifice revelation. Reimarus, not with some

²⁹⁴ Pierre Belon, *Les observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses memorables, trouvées en Grece, Asie, Judée, Egypte, Arabie, & autres pays estranges, redigées en trois livres* (Paris, 1588), 276: “Ceste mer rouge n'est sinon un canal etroit, non plus large que Seine entre Haurefleur & Hondefleur, ou l'on peut naviguer malaisement & en grand peril: car les rochers y sont moult frequents.”

²⁹⁵ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 319–20: “Strabo schreibt: daß auf dem rothen Meere schlimm zu schiffen sey [...] so bezeugt es noch in neueren Zeiten Petrus Bellonius: Man kann auf dem rothen Meere, nicht anders als mit Beschwerden und grosser Gefahr schiffen, wegen der häufigen Felßklippen [...]. Es kommt aber ein neues Hinderniß für Fußgänger hinzu, daß auch der Boden mit vielem Moose, Schilf und Grünigkeit bedeckt ist. Denn es heist nicht umsonst Schilfmeer [...]. ja die angrenzenden Fischer pflegten sich am Strande von dem ausgeworfenen Seemose Hütten, oder wenigstens Dächer ihrer Gruben, zu machen. Das hat Bochart mit vielen Zeugnissen der Alten bewiesen [...]”

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 324–25: “Nun aber soll der arme Pharao ersauffen. Jetzt lässt er die Unwegsamkeit des Seebodens einfließen. Da ist an vielen Orten ein häufiger tieffer Schlamm: dort ist ein tieffer Sand, da die Räder stark hinein schneiden [...]. So kommen die Wagen in einander, und halten sich auf, fahren an die Klippen hinan, zerbrechen die Räder, werffen um [...]. Hat der Wind nun erst so vielen Sand und Schlamm dahin geführt? Sind die Klippen und Corallen-Stauden, wie die Schämme, in der letzten Nachtwache hervorgewachsen?”

disappointment,²⁹⁷ recognizes this and faults Le Clerc for it. Although both men basically use a very comparable range of sources, classical works and travel accounts, Reimarus is in fact the one who has taken Le Clerc's principles fully to heart and "examined the Bible just as if he read Aristophanes." With the reverberations of their meeting in our ears, we may wonder who would have been more shocked had it occurred thirty years later.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 323: "Aber einem so belesenen und vernünftigen Manne, als Clericus war, ist seine Partheylichkeit, in der Behauptung der Möglichkeit dieses Durchgangs durchs Rothe Meer, kaum zu verzeihen."

Reimarus, the Cardinal, and the Remaking of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*

In December 1746, a notably exasperated Reimarus wrote a disgruntled letter to his longtime correspondent and benefactor Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini,¹ archbishop of Brescia and head of the Vatican Library (Fig. 7). Querini had just informed him that Nicolaus Carminius Falco (1681–1759),² who was then archbishop of Naples, was planning to publish his new edition of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*—a project, Reimarus thought, that Falco had long abandoned:

I admit that nothing has caught me more by surprise than that after twenty-two years of silence this famous man sets out to fulfill his promise [...]. Surely for the last three years now, if I am not mistaken, you have not only publicly announced my Dio project, but you have even presented yourself thus far as a great supporter of it, if I may not even say eulogist of this cause: why did [Falco] not approach you? Why did he not revive [in public] the nearly already extinguished and buried awareness about his work? Why did he at least not according to the law of postliminy indicate that he wanted to reclaim his right?³

* An earlier version of this chapter has been published under the same title in Martin Mulsow, ed., *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768)*. Leiden and New York: Brill, 2011: 103–57.

¹ On Querini, see Alfred Breithaupt, *De Cardinalis Quirini vita et operibus* (Paris, 1889); Gino Benzoni, ed., *Cultura, religione e politica nell'età di Angelo Maria Querini* (Brescia, 1980); Ennio Ferraglio and Daniele Montanari, eds., *Angelo Maria Querini a Corfù: mondo greco e latino al tramonto dell'antico regime* (Brescia, 2005).

² On Falco, see *Archivio biografico italiano*, I 390, 50–60.

³ vqs. Ms. 257, Reimarus to Angelo Maria Querini, 10 December 1746: “Fateor, nihil magis praeter expectationem meam accidisse, quam hoc, quod post duorum et viginti annorum silentium, Vir Clarissimus exequi promissa instituerit [...]. Quando enim iam ante triennium, ni fallor, Dionis mei non tantum mentionem publice fecisti, sed patronum Te adeo magnum et adiutorem, ne dicam laudatorem, causae praebuisti: cur non scripsit ad Te? cur memoriam suae operae iam prope extinctam et sepultam, non renovavit? cur postliminio saltem ius suum vindicare se velle non significavit?”



FIGURE 7 *Portrait of Angelo Maria Querini (1680–1755) by unknown painter from Brescia, possibly a student of Francesco Paglia (1636–1714) [ca. mid-18th century].*
COURTESY OF BIBLIOTECA QUERINIANA, BRESCIA

Why did this matter spark such indignation with Reimarus? In order to grasp the depth and significance of this issue, we need to turn the entire scenario back to an earlier point in Reimarus's life, when on 30 April 1736, Reimarus's famous mentor, benefactor, and father-in-law Johann Albert Fabricius died at the age of sixty-eight.

While the entire scholarly community mourned this loss, the gaze of learned Europe remained focused intently on Hamburg. As quickly as the news of his death spread, so also did the interest in what would happen to the treasure of books, manuscripts, and papers that the learned man had so diligently gathered. His huge library of approximately 30,000 books and 200 manuscripts had always been a prominent destination for scholars; and during his lifetime, Fabricius had been very generous both in granting visitors access to his collection and in even lending books to trusted scholars and correspondents or providing them with variants from other sources.⁴ The polyhistor and bibliophile Zacharias von Uffenbach on his travels through Hamburg in February 1710 visited and described Fabricius's library:

It is spread out, due to the lack of space and the comforts of the old building, in six small rooms, three of which are on the second floor, the other remaining ones together with a small cabinet, which contains only editions of Greek authors, on the third floor [...]. Virtually all editions, which he lists in his *Bibliotheca latina* and *graeca*, are present. And wherever something new appears in print, it is immediately sent to him; and he showed us then about twenty of the most beautiful volumes, which he had already received this year from Italy, Holland, and especially England.⁵

⁴ See Erik Petersen, *Johann Albert Fabricius: En Humanist I Europa* (Copenhagen, 1998), vol. 1, 417 and vol. 2, 88i.

⁵ Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland* (Frankfurt, 1753), vol. 2, 86–87: "Selbige stehet wegen Mangel des Raums, und Bequemlichkeit des alten Hauses in sechs kleinen Zimmern, davon drey im zweyten, die andern drey aber nebст einem kleinem Cabinet, darinnen lauter editiones autorum graecorum, auf dem dritten Stockwerk sind [...]. Es finden sich fast alle Editionen allhier, so er in seiner *Bibliotheca latina & graeca* anführt. Ja wo nur etwas heraus kommt, wird es ihm sogleich zugesendet; wie er uns dann wohl zwanzig der schönsten Bücher zeigte, so er dieses Jahr bereits aus Italien, Holland, und sonderlich Engelland erhalten."

A library of such caliber was not only of intellectual value, but of material value as well, and often served as a financial asset for those left behind. Although Fabricius's wife had died recently, in January 1736, and both his daughters were already married, it was decided to auction off both the library and the manuscript collection.⁶ The task of compiling the auction catalogue and of responding to unanswered correspondence fell to his trusted son-in-law Reimarus. It is quite likely that Reimarus was able to put aside from his father-in-law's collection a number of books for himself, but spatial considerations as well as financial limitations prevented him from taking as much as he had wanted. It would certainly be useful to compare the auction catalogue that was compiled by Scheteling upon Reimarus's death with that of Fabricius to get an approximate idea about which works Reimarus actually took. A brief glance into the auction catalogue of Reimarus's library confirms that quite a substantial number of manuscripts and lists of variants had passed from the Fabrician collection into Reimarus's hands. Not surprisingly, many of them were editions of classical authors,⁷ often with marginalia by Fabricius.

This benefit notwithstanding, the psychological and practical effects of Fabricius's death upon Reimarus were substantial. As Anne Goldgar has noted in her splendid portrayal of the Republic of Letters, "the scattered residence of scholars, the unavailability of books, the difficulty of travel, and the sometimes mystifying nature of the book trade" were substantial factors in determining the success or failure of its citizens, depending on their location and to whomever they were connected.⁸ Reimarus thus lost in 1736 not only a mentor and friend, but also an important resource. No longer would he be able to venture across the street of the *Gymnasium illustre* where he worked and drop by Fabricius's house to borrow a book or a manuscript, receive an update on recent publications and gossip, or be introduced to some famous scholar passing through Hamburg. Nonetheless, Fabricius's death also presented a new window of opportunity. Since he was entrusted with compiling the auction catalogue as well as answering unfulfilled requests, Reimarus was able to remain at an important intersection within the Republic of Letters and, as we shall see, following the footsteps of his famous father-in-law, establish his

6 On book auctions in eighteenth-century Hamburg, see Hans-Walter Stork, "Hamburger Buchauktionen im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger and Sandra Richter (Berlin, 2012), 263–90.

7 See *Catalogus bibliothecae beati Herm. Sam. Reimari*, ed. Johann Andreas Goffried Scheteling (Hamburg, 1768), pars II.

8 Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (New Haven, 1995), 13.

own learned network. So in October 1736 we find Reimarus writing a response to an earlier letter from Cardinal Querini. The cardinal, who as archbishop of Brescia was still very connected to his city's history, was at that time working on a series of editions of the ancient fathers of the Brescian church. By 1721, Fabricius himself had published an edition of a work by one of them, Philastrius's *De Haeresibus liber*,⁹ and the cardinal was asking if, since the publication of this edition, Fabricius had subsequently added notes in the margins of his own copy that he might be willing to share for a new edition.¹⁰ Reimarus found little among Fabricius's papers to satisfy this particular request, but he was able to send Querini a number of references and some excerpts by the fourth-century Syrian Christian writer Saint Ephrem.¹¹ Cardinal Querini was apparently so pleased with Reimarus's response that in return he offered him the Vatican Library as a resource for the future. This offer, however innocently it may have been scribbled down, was the beginning of an intensive correspondence between the two men that spanned a period of almost twenty years. These letters have been unknown until now and have not previously been evaluated vis-à-vis Reimarus's work or intellectual development, but they have proven to be incredibly insightful and revealing. As a result of this correspondence, Reimarus established himself as a scholar par excellence and a

⁹ Philastrius, *De Haeresibus liber cum emendationibus et notis J.A. Fabricii* (Hamburg, 1721); see letter Querini to Fabricius, 19 July 1736, Royal Library Copenhagen, Fabr. 104–23: “Peto preaterea ab humanitate tua, ut mecum communicare dignetur secundas curas, si quas in promptu habet, ad locus petandam Editionem S. Philatrii, quam Brixia adornamus una cum Editione ss. Gaudentii Adelmanni et Lamperti, quippe qui in animum induxi, eum eximium Ecclesia mea decas sit, quattuor ex antiquis episcopis suis tam doctrina quam sanctitate florentes ostendare, eorum Opera unico volumine, eoque satis magnifico complecti.”

¹⁰ VQS. Ms. 257, Reimarus to Angelo Maria Querini, 15 October 1736: “Litterae ab Eminentia Tua scriptae ad Fabricium, mihi genero post eius obitum, quamquam serius, redditiae sunt; in quibus video desiderari posteriores Fabricii ad Philastrum curas, et quae ille de textu Syriaco S. Ephraimi recens completa habeat [...] .”

¹¹ According to his letter, Reimarus was able to make these excerpts from the Slavonic Codex, which were provided by Johann Peter Kohl (1698–1778), the famous polyhistor and former professor of church history at the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg. Following a rumor of his secret relationship with the future Empress Elizabeth, Kohl was dismissed in 1728, but granted a pension. He spent the rest of his life in Hamburg and Altona. According to Erik Petersen's records, Kohl was already corresponding with Fabricius and, though no records exist, Reimarus may have made Kohl's acquaintance through his father-in-law. On Kohl, see Richard Hoche, “Kohl, Johann Peter,” in *ADB* 16 (1882), 425; see also Petersen, *Johann Albert Fabricius*, 932.

first-class Graecist, whose work left a mark on the map of the *Respublica literaria* and who no longer stood in the shadow of his famous mentor Fabricius.¹²

While sifting through the papers of the deceased, Reimarus came across extensive notes on Cassius Dio's *Historiae romanae*, which he must have remembered from the time when Fabricius was alive. Aware of their value but also of their need for revision and with the cardinal's offer still fresh in his mind, Reimarus jumped at the opportunity and sent another letter to the Vatican, asking for help in this undertaking and more specifically for collations from two Dio manuscripts that were stored in the Vatican Library:

[...] I shall ask from You, boldly and openly, that you administer without any hesitation the collation of these Vatican codices, which the Most Reverend Nicolaus Carminius Falco mentions. Just as friends have informed me that a new edition of Dio could hardly be expected from him anymore, I have at the same time the extensive and learned notes of my father-in-law on the same author in my hands, which are admittedly not unworthy to be published, if by your kindness it is granted to polish this same author by relying on old manuscripts. I would then have almost everything, to whichever edition a collation would be made, since I own all [editions] that exist.¹³

Reimarus's claim that he owns all editions that exist seems unimpressive at first, since the number of useful editions, other than the *editio princeps*, can be reduced to fewer than a handful. Many editions that appeared between 1490 and 1724 were either translations from the Greek into Latin, as well as into

¹² The first footnote in the unabridged version of Gibbon's monumental *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, for example, reads: "Dion Cassius [...] with the annotations of Reimar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the subject [...]; see Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J.B. Bury, vol. 1 (London, 1905), 2.

¹³ vqs. Ms. 257, letter Reimarus to Querini, 29 February 1737: "[...] Ipse, Amplissime Cardinalis, petam abs Te audacter et libere, Dionis nimirum Cassii ut collationem ad Codices Vaticanos institui haud gravatim cures, quos memorat Rev. Nicolaus Carminius Falco. Nam ut Dionis editionem novam ab illo vix sperandam esse retulerunt amici, ita Soceri mei notas in eundem Scriptorem amplas et eruditas habeo in manibus, luce profecto non indignas, si ipsum auctorem fide veterum membranarum expolire Tuo beneficio daretur. Perinde autem mihi fuerit, ad quam editionem collatio institut[a], quoniam eas quae extant possideo propemodum omn[ia]."

different vernacular languages,¹⁴ or slightly revised Greek-Latin editions based upon the *editio princeps* with the learned *emendationes* or *castigationes* by scholars such as Friedrich Sylburg (1536–1596) or Guillaume Le Blanc (1520–1587).¹⁵ It is no surprise that the *editio princeps* came from the printing press of Robert Estienne (1503–1559),¹⁶ whose beautiful editions of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts and meticulous work with manuscripts that he dug up in the libraries of colleges, monasteries, and cathedrals had earned him the title of *Imprimeur du Roy* for all three of these languages. Estienne's edition was based on a single fifteenth-century manuscript from the Bibliothèque du Roi. From the original eighty books of Dio's *Historiae romanae*, it contained only twenty-five, specifically Books xxxv–l ix, in which Dio narrates events from the last decades of the Roman Republic until the assassination of Caligula in 41 C.E.¹⁷ But both Estienne in his appended castigations and Fabricius in his *Bibliotheca graeca* lament that the Parisian codex was full of faults and in need of purging.¹⁸ By the mid-seventeenth century, however, a number of other sources suitable

¹⁴ Among them was a vernacular Italian edition by the sixteenth-century Ferrarese physician Niccolò Leoniceno which Reimarus would later discard as being without any value: *Dione delle Guerre de Romani. Tradotto da M. Niccolò Leoniceno* (Venice, 1524); on Leoniceno, see Daniela Mugnai Carrara, "Profilo di Niccolò Leoniceno," *Interpres* 2 (1979), pp. 169–212 and her *La biblioteca di Niccolò Leoniceno* (Florence, 1991).

¹⁵ For a detailed treatment of the transmission history, see Ursulus Philippus Boissevain, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiarum Romanarum quae supersunt*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1895), ii–cvi.

¹⁶ On Robert Estienne, see Elizabeth Armstrong, *Robert Estienne, Royal Printer: An Historical Study of the Elder Stephanus* (Cambridge, 1954); also Fred Schreiber, *The Estiennes: An Annotated Catalogue of 300 Highlights of Their Various Presses* (New York, 1982); on Estienne's famous type designs, see Hendrik D.L. Vervliet, "Robert Estienne's Printing Types," *The Library* 5 (2004), 107–75.

¹⁷ Robert Estienne, *TΩΝ ΔΙΩΝΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΚΩΝ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΩΝ ΕΙΚΟΣΙΤΡΙΑ ΒΙΒΑΙΑ. Dionis Romanarum historiarum libri xxiii, a xxxvi ad lviii usque* (Paris, 1548). One of the inaccuracies was that the Books lvii and lviii are mended together into Book lvii and again Books l ix and lx into Book lviii, as Fabricius in his *Bibliotheca graeca* correctly observed (as did Xylander before him): "In hac nitida editione non desunt liber l ix et lx, sed tantummodo ex libris lvii et lviii. unus factus est, quinquagesimus septimus, et ex l ix ac lx. itidem unus, quinquagesimus octavus [...]." See Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliotheca graeca*, ed. Gottlieb Christoph Harles, vol. 5 (Hamburg, 1796), 146.

¹⁸ Fabricius calls the fifteenth-century codex "mendosus, nec satis castigatus," whereas Estienne admits that "cum unico exemplari, eoque valde mendoso usi essemus, de iis locis te admonere, quos adhibita coniectura, similiumve locorum collatione emendaturi speraremus, non incommodum fore putavimus [...]." See Fabricius, *Bibliotheca graeca*, 145; for Estienne's account, see *TΩΝ ΔΙΩΝΟΣ*, 474.

to patch the gaps of the missing books had surfaced. In 1582, the Roman humanist Fulvio Orsini¹⁹ (1529–1600) published a collection of previously unknown fragments from Greek historians relevant for the study of Roman law.²⁰ Among them were passages from the last three books of Cassius Dio. Unfortunately, the bookbinder accidentally cut off the two exterior columns from the Greek original and, since Orsini was no longer able to make much sense of portions of the mutilated text, he dotted it with asterisks. The fate of the damaged manuscript was the same as that of Orsini's entire collection of books and manuscripts: they were donated to the Vatican Library where they remain one of its gems. During the 1620s, the French antiquarian Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637)²¹ acquired a Byzantine manuscript codex under the title *Περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας* (De virtute et vicio), which had been commissioned during the tenth century by Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (912–959) and contained excerpts from various Greek authors on curious cases of morals and ethics.²² For the highly demanding task of identifying the corresponding Greek authors of each excerpt, reassembling them, and preparing the collection for publication, Peiresc was able to hire the eccentric French

¹⁹ On Fulvio Orsini, see Giuseppina Cellini, *Il contributo di Fulvio Orsini alla ricerca antiquaria* (Rome, 2004); more specifically on his library, Pierre de Nolhac, *La bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini: contributions à l'histoire des collections d'Italie et à l'étude de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1887); Giovanni Beltrani, *I libri di Fulvio Orsini nella Biblioteca Vaticana* (Rome, 1886).

²⁰ Fulvio Orsini, *Ex libris Polybii, selecta de legationibus* (Antwerp, 1582).

²¹ Peter Miller, *Peiresc's Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2000); more recently, see also Miller's *Peiresc's Orient: Antiquarianism as Cultural History in the Seventeenth Century* (Burlington, Vt., 2012).

²² Peiresc seems well aware of the incredible value of this find, especially in regard to Dio. He points out that the excerpts contain sections that have never been printed before, but would most certainly need some polishing and preparation by an expert scholar familiar with the different Greek authors and their styles: “[...] il y aurà icy des choses asseurement non imprimées, comme de Dio, dont les extraits commencent à Numa [...]. Mais il falloit qu'il eust esté auparavant descousu et deschiré et quelques feuillets perdus, dont il est aisé d'en reconnoistre les deffectuositez [...] et se trouvant des transpositions toutes manifestes en divers endroits, où l'on a entrelassé des cahiers du Polybe dans ceux du Dion et de ceux du Dion parmy ceux d'autres autheurs. Ce qui a besoing d'une disquisition bien exacte et d'une patience telle que pourroit estre celle de Messrs. Saulmaise, Holstenius (ou de M. Rigault, s'il vouloit s'y assujettir) pour bien discerner par le style different, ce qui merite d'estre restitué à son vray autheur, là ou les allegations manquent.” See letter from Peiresc to his friends, the brothers Dupuy, 18 December 1627, in *Lettres de Peiresc aux Frères Dupuy*, ed. Philippe Tamizey de Larroque, vol. 1 (Paris, 1888), 445.

humanist and historiographer Henri de Valois (1603–1676),²³ who proceeded to publish the work in 1634.²⁴ In the meantime Robert Estienne published an edition of the epitome of Dio, which the eleventh-century Byzantine monk John Xiphilinus²⁵ had made upon the request of the emperor Michael Ducas (r. 1071–78) and which incorporated large portions of Books XXXVI–LXXX, stretching from the year 68 B.C.E., the consulship of Pompey, to the year 229 C.E., the reign of Severus Alexander.

It did not take long for the first Latin edition, as well as bilingual Greek-Latin editions, to appear. In the same year of the publication of the Estienne edition of Xiphilinus's epitome, the French humanist and archbishop of Toulouse, Guillaume Le Blanc (1520–1587),²⁶ published a critical Latin edition. Only seven years later, in 1557, a young and still-inexperienced Wilhelm Xylander (1532–1576)²⁷ used both Le Blanc's translation of the epitome and Robert Estienne's *editio princeps* to render the entire Cassius Dio into Latin within just seven months, a formidable accomplishment for an autodidact, especially since Estienne's folio edition alone consists of 473 neatly printed pages in

²³ "Er war im übrigen von einer besondern Gemüths-Beschaffenheit, und konte nicht leiden, daß jemand das geringste an seinen Wercken aussetzte, da er hingegen nicht leichtlich ein fremdes Buch lobte. Wenn er krank war, schloß er sich in sein Zimmer ein, schrye und heilte über seine Schmertzen, konnte aber doch hernach nicht leiden, daß man sagte, er wäre krank gewesen. Als er 70 Jahre alt war, wünschte ihm der jüngere Gronov in einem Briefe ein langes und glückliches Alter, welches ihm, weil er nicht meynte, daß er alt sey, so sehr verdroß, daß er den Gronov heftig schmähere, und seinen Brief zur Erden schmiß." See Zedlers *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 46 (Halle, 1746), 325–27.

²⁴ Henri de Valois, *Polybii Diodori Siculi Nicolai Damasceni Dionysii Halicar. Appiani Aledandi Dionis et Iaonnis Antiocheni excerea ex collectaneis Constantini Augusti Porphyrogenetae [...] nunc primum Graece edidit, Latine vertit, notisque illustravit* (Paris, 1634).

²⁵ Robert Estienne, *Dionis Nicaei Rerum Romanarum a Pompeio Magno ad Alexandrum Mamaeae filium, Epitome authore Ianne Xiphilino* (Paris, 1551). Our second source besides Xiphilinus are the excerpts by the more paraphrasing eleventh-century Byzantine chronicler and historian John Zonaras, whose *Ἐπιτομὴ ἱστοριῶν*, a history of the world up to 1118, is based upon a number of ancient sources such as Flavius Josephus, Plutarch, Herodotus, and Cassius Dio.

²⁶ On Guillaume Le Blanc, see *Dictionnaire de biographie française* 6 (1954), 583.

²⁷ See Fritz Schöll, "Wilhelm Xylander (1532–1576) [Wilhelm Holtzman]" in *ADB* 44 (1898), 582–93; see also Jill Kraye, "'Ethnicorum omnium sanctissimus': Marcus Aurelius and His Meditations from Xylander to Diderot," in *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Jill Kraye and M.W.F. Stone (London, 2000), 107–10.

Greek.²⁸ Despite partially successful attempts by Xylander's contemporary and friend Johannes Leunclavius (1541–1593)²⁹ to emend both text and translation in his new 1592 Latin edition, which incorporated twenty more books from Xiphilinus's epitome and which was published by the Huguenot printers Johan Aubry and Claude de Marne, the son-in-law of the famous master Andreas Wechtel, many of these editions had become rare by the late seventeenth century. And although Leunclavius made significant corrections in the Latin translation, the sixteenth-century French humanist Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614) still mockingly wrote that it was so bad that he was unable to recognize the hand of such a supposedly skilled scholar in it.³⁰ What was needed was a new critical Greek-Latin edition that would incorporate newly discovered fragments and epitomes, touch up the translation and—what none of the previous editions had done so far—offer both a historical and a philological commentary.

²⁸ Wilhelm Xylander, *Dionis Cassii Nicaei historiae libri (tot enim hodie extant) xxv. nimrum à xxxvi ad lxi. [sic]... Additum est Ioannis Xiphilini è Dione compendium, Gul. Blanco Albiensi interprete [...] (Basel, 1558). Xylander himself in his dedication to his benefactor Johann Heinrich Herward humbly admits his own shortcomings: “I do not even mention the feebleness of my intellect, the ignorance of my age, the deficiency of my training as well as the brevity of time involved (as you know, notwithstanding of however much I have also been busy elsewhere, I have completed this entire work in only seven months); only the experts know how difficult it is to render good Greek editions into proper Latin ones. [Omitto ingenii imbecillitatem, aetatis imprudentiam, exercitationis defectum, temporis quoque (nam totus hic labor nobis, quod nosti, intra septimum mensem desudatus est, utcunque aliunde etiam impeditis) angustiam: ex bonis Graecis bonos Latinos libros facere, quantae sit difficultatis, sciunt qui sunt experti]”; reprinted in Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae quae supersunt...cum annotationibus Hermanni Samuelis Reimari*, vol. II (Hamburg, 1752), 1387.*

²⁹ Johannes Leunclavius, *Dionis Cassii Cocceiani Historiae Romanae libri XLVI partim integri, partim mutili, partim excerpti [...] (Frankfurt, 1592)*; on Johannes Leunclavius, see Melchior Adam, *Vitae germanorum philosophorum, qui seculo superiori, et quod excurrit, philosophicis ac humanioribus literis clari floruerunt* (Frankfurt, 1615), 379–81; Adalbert Horawitz, “Johannes Leunclavius,” in *ADB* 18 (1883), 488–93; Dieter Metzler, “Johannes Löwenklau,” in *NDB* 15 (Berlin, 1987), 95–96; also M.-P. Burtin, “Un apôtre de la tolérance: l’humaniste allemand Johannes Löwenklau dit Leunclavius (1541–1593?)”, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 52 (1990), 561–70; Pál Ács, “Pro Turcis and contra Turcos: Curiosity, Scholarship and Spiritualism in Turkish Histories by Johannes Löwenklau (1541–1594),” *Acta Comeniana* 25 (2011), 1–22.

³⁰ “Enimvero non queo dissimulare, virum eruditissimum sic versatum esse in eo auctore, ut Leunclavium equidem non agnoscam; ita multa crassa, foeda, ingentia hominis peccata: jures, si illum aliunde non noris, neque linguae Graecae neque Latinae, neque historiae Romanae neque Juris ullam λόγου &ξέων habuisse eum cognitionem”; quoted in Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. I (1750), xviii.

Such a work seemed more than necessary, especially given the value and status Dio enjoyed. To be sure, this esteem has not been the case since the nineteenth century. The eminent German classical scholar Eduard Schwartz (1858–1940), in his brilliant entry in Pauly-Wissowa, criticized Dio's submission to rhetorical theory, his inability to describe military operations, and his lack of organization.³¹ Dio seems to have almost completely fallen from grace in today's classics departments. To my knowledge, not a single Greek student edition of his work has ever been published. This was not always the case. During the Middle Ages the Byzantine theologian Photius (820–886) praised Dio's Thucydidean style.³² But much later and closer to home, the Dutch erudite Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577–1649) in his *De historicis graecis* seconded Photius's praise,³³ and Vossius's fellow countryman Lipsius lamented that "almost nothing about ancient Rome would have been lost to us if this author were available in his entirety."³⁴ This list of admirers could be continued, and so it is by no means surprising that between 1700 and 1736 numerous projects of a new edition of Dio were begun, discontinued, or resumed. In 1701, for example, the *Acta eruditorum* announced that the Amsterdam printing press owned by the Huguetan brothers was preparing a new Greek-Latin edition. The same journal announced eleven years later that a Greek-Latin edition with the learned notes of a certain Obadiah Oddey, an Englishman, was under way.³⁵ None of these projected editions ever made it to the printing press. But new hope grew out of rumors about the discovery of at least thirty of the lost

³¹ Eduard Schwartz, "Cassius Dio Cocceianus," in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. Georg Wissowa, vol. 3 (Stuttgart, 1899), 1684–1722.

³² Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 4040.001: Ἔστι δὲ τὴν φράσιν μεγαλοπρεπῶς τε καὶ εἰς ὅγκον διεσκευασμένος, ὅτι καὶ μεγάλων ἔργων ἐννοίας ἀπαγγέλλει [...]. Εν δέ γε ταῖς δημηγορίαις, ἄριστος καὶ μιμητής Θουκυδίου, πλὴν εἴ τι πρὸς τὸ σαφέστερον ἀφορᾶ.

³³ Gerardus Ioannes Vossius, *De Historicis Graecis libri IV* (Leyden, 1651), 237–38: "Grandi stylo, & in concionibus Thucydidem aemulari, sed magis esse perspicuum, judicat Photius [...]." On Vossius, C.S.M. Rademaker, *Life and Work of Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577–1649)* (Assen, 1981); also Nicholas Wickenden, *G.J. Vossius and the Humanist Concept of History* (Assen, 1993).

³⁴ "Nihil paene nos fugeret in rebus Romanis [...] si scriptor ille totus exstaret." See Justus Lipsius, *Opera Omnia*, vol. III.2 (Wesel, 1675), 802. On Lipsius, see Anthony Grafton, "Portrait of Justus Lipsius," *American Scholar* 56 (1987), 382–90; also Marc Laureys, "Lipsius and Pighius: The Changing Face of Humanist Scholarship," *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 68 (1998), 329–44.

³⁵ See *Acta eruditorum* 2 (1701), p. 430 and *Acta eruditorum* 5 (1712), 528.

books of Cassius Dio.³⁶ These rumors, though grossly overstated, appeared to be at least partially true because in 1724, the then forty-three-year-old Vatican *proto-notarius* Nicolaus Carminius Falco published a work under the title *Cassii Dionis Romanae Historiae ultimi libri tres reperti restitutique*.³⁷ Falco claimed that, while he was sifting through Orsini's mutilated codex, by a "stroke of good fortune," he had been able to "repair and recover approximately the last three books from the originally eighty books in their entirety" and that he was optimistic about his prospects of restoring the *Roman History* to its original splendor.³⁸

As we already know from Reimarus's letter to Querini, up to that point this promise had remained unfulfilled. This brings us back to the situation in 1737, when Reimarus requested the collation of the two Vatican codices. We do not know exactly how far the project had already progressed in Fabricius's hands or, more importantly, what Fabricius's initial plan was in regard to Dio, but in order to assess Reimarus's contribution, it would be helpful to have some idea about it. From the famous Italian man of letters Scipione Maffei (1675–1755) we learn that in 1727 he himself had originally planned to work on a new edition of Cassius Dio, but that he had "discarded the idea" once he learned that "the renowned Albert Fabricius, who would be much more successful in such an undertaking and to whom [Maffei] was much indebted" was in the process of preparing such an edition.³⁹ So does this mean then that Falco's discovery in 1724 may have served as a trigger for other scholars such as Fabricius or Maffei to cast their eyes on this particular classical author and reawaken their interest in him? The idea certainly sounds tempting, since Fabricius, as one of the foremost Greek scholars in the world, undoubtedly monitored these types of events, but it does not hold in this case. According to Johann Christoph Wolf, equally a close friend of Fabricius's, the edition was already well under way

³⁶ In his letter to Girolamo Lagomarsini, Scipione Maffei recalls a visit to Muratori in October 1723, during which the latter informed him about the discovery. See Scipione Maffei, *Tre lettere del signor marchese Scipione Maffei* (Verona, 1748), 8.

³⁷ Nicolaus Carminius Falco, *Cassii Dionis Romanae Historiae ultimi libri tres reperti restitutique* [...] (Rome, 1724).

³⁸ "[...] sed integros ferme tres postremos, ex octoginta Dionis libris [...], dum vehementer fortuna arridet, reparare, orbique visus sim restituere"; *ibid.*, vi.

³⁹ "[...] ma l'intendere come ha già preso in Amburgo quest'Autor per mano il rinomato Alberto Fabricio, il quale può tanto meglio riuscire in sì fatta impresa, e cui molto debbo per avermi con tanta gentilezza voluto indirizzare il Volume duodecimo dell'eruditissima sua Biblioteca Greca, mi ha fatto desistere da tal pensiero"; Scipione Maffei, *Istoria Diplomatica* (Mantua, 1727), 18.

before 1724 when Falco made his discovery.⁴⁰ Apart from that, it is unlikely that Fabricius would have engaged in a rat race with another scholar.⁴¹ Although he may have been quite combative in his younger years, he had established himself as an elegant and extremely gracious man of learning, and it is more plausible that Fabricius abandoned his plans once he learned about Falco's future plans, which, though not observed by everyone, remained a form of etiquette in the Republic of Letters.⁴²

The mystery is solved by Fabricius's son-in-law who, upon explaining the layout of his first volume, informs us that most of the historical notes from Books XXXV–LX were complete on 7 September 1726 and thereupon submitted for publication, but

[Fabricius] put them aside thereafter, because the printers with whom he had dealt did not want to begin publication, unless every single part of it, from beginning to end, was absolutely perfect and complete when he handed [the manuscript] over to [them]; but for this kind of work he never had the patience, so that he seemed to receive my pleas and encouragements, which were reiterated constantly in regard to what still needed to be done, with some annoyance. Why he would then not have touched any part from the Greek text, the translation, the indices, the fragments, and the remaining twenty books seems then common sense. After his death it would have appeared as an ungrateful act if I let his labor-intensive annotations perish, since they were composed with so much attentiveness, erudition, copiousness, and intelligence [...].⁴³

⁴⁰ See letter from Johann Christoph Wolf to Erik Benzelius, 3 December 1722: "Cl. amicissimusque Fabricius noster in recognoscendo Dione Cassio totus est. Illius imprimendi initium Lipsiae fiet vere imminente, sumtibus Fritschii"; quoted in Alvar Erikson, ed., *Letters to Erik Benzelius the Younger from Learned Foreigners*, vol. 1: 1697–1722 (Gothenburg, 1979), 249.

⁴¹ In the entry on him in the *ADB*, Fabricius is characterized as "dienstfertig und freundlich gegen Jedermann (mit einer einzigen, von ihm später bereuten Ausnahme in seiner Erstlingsschrift) milde in seinem Urtheil über Andere, allgemein beliebt und geachtet [...]"; see Jacob Achilles Mähly and Carl Bertheau, "Fabricius, Johann Albert," in *ADB* 6 (1877), 520.

⁴² See, for example, Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning*, 22.

⁴³ Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), xxviii, § 21: [...] seposuit tamen postea temporis, quod bibliopole, cum quibus egerat, editionem aggredi nollent, nisi omnia & singula quae ad eam pertinerent, a capite ad calcem absoluta & perfecta simul semelque in manus ipsis tradidisset, cuius laboris patientiam impetrare a se numquam potuit, sic ut preces meas & cohortationes, praesertim iteratas, de addendis

It seems astonishing that printers would reject a work by the renowned author of magnificent publications such as the *Bibliotheca graeca* and the *Bibliotheca antiquaria*, since all of Fabricius's writings had found acclaim and applause throughout the learned universe.⁴⁴ But the printer in question, Johann Heinrich Wettstein (1646–1726),⁴⁵ uncle of the famous editor of the Greek New Testament, was much praised for his beautiful Greek editions and was certainly not overawed by Fabricius's name because the list of his illustrious clients reads like the “who's who” in the Republic of Letters. Reimarus's remark suggests that Fabricius may have had little patience with the market-driven requests by printers and copy editors.⁴⁶ This also explains why he generally employed several scholars, possibly even students from the nearby *Gymnasium illustre*, who would help him and take over some of the editorial tasks.⁴⁷ It seems that Fabricius initially tried to make adjustments and corrections, but eventually he put these notes aside.⁴⁸ Reimarus's remark also reveals that Fabricius was most likely not planning a new, more complete edition since his notes basically corresponded with the *editio princeps*. A letter by Johann Christoph Wolf

reliquis, postremo molestius ferre videretur. Cur igitur graeca, cur versionem, cur indices, cur fragmenta & reliquos xx. libros nulla parte attigerit, ex ratione modeo dicta facile intellegitur. Eo vita functo, indignum facinus visum est, si annotationes ejus affectas perire sinerem: tanta enim conscriptae sunt diligentia, eruditione, copia, & mentis acie, [...].

- 44 Cardinal Querini, for example, writes in his letter to Fabricius: “Insignis illa Tua Vir Clarissime, Graeca Bibliotheca, quam saepe [...] manibus habeo [...]”; letter Querini to Fabricius, 22 June 1731, Royal Library, Copenhagen, Cod. Fabr. 104–23.
- 45 On Johann Heinrich Wettstein (1646–1726), see Zedlers *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, vol. 55, 1001–2.
- 46 In retrospect, they may have asked him to expand the *editio princeps* by incorporating recently discovered fragments or to improve the Latin translation.
- 47 We know, for example, that the highly talented but hopelessly irresponsible Graecist Stephan Bergler helped Fabricius with his *Bibliotheca graeca*. See Conrad Bursian, *Geschichte der classischen Philologie in Deutschland*, vol. 1 (1883), 362.
- 48 See the letter from Fabricius to Erik Benzelius, dated 13 June 1730, which indicates that he was still immersed in making corrections and revisions: “Mihi in Dione Cassio illustrando hactenus opera quaedam posita est, quod autem ἀντιδώρου possim loco ablegare nihil iam habeo quam Lutheri nuper à me vulgatum Centifolium [...]”; quoted in Alvar Erikson, ed., *Letters to Erik Benzelius the Younger from Learned Foreigners*, vol. 2: 1722–1743 (Gothenburg, 1979), 322.

to the learned French savant Maturinus Veyssi  re La Croze (1661–1739)⁴⁹ confirms that Fabricius, at least initially, did not bother including excerpts from the epitomes by the Byzantine monk Xiphilinus.⁵⁰ Although Fabricius spent some time trying to accommodate the Wettstein printing house, he must have redirected his focus to other projects—probably no later than 1730.⁵¹

The image of Reimarus reminding Fabricius about his notes on Dio, taken together with a later comment by Scipione Maffei⁵² that Fabricius may not even have planned a new edition, but more likely just some philological observations on Dio, suggests that the decision about the new edition and its layout, the nature of the critical apparatus with a meticulous recording of Greek variants, the correction of the Latin translations of Xylander and Leunclavius, the appendices with the extended biographical sketch, and the inclusion of the *castigationes* and *emendationes* from the pens of previous and contemporary scholars are based more on Reimarus's own initiative than on that of his father-in-law. These methods essentially reflect the classical scholarship prevalent at that time in Holland, where Richard Bentley's revolutionary work⁵³ had undoubtedly already had a huge impact. German classical scholarship, however, had remained much more faithful to the framework of a *historia literaria* that was principally concerned with printed editions. Even a cursory look

49 On La Croze, see Martin Mulsow, *Die drei Ringe: Toleranz und clandestine Gelehrsamkeit bei Mathurin Veyssi  re La Croze* (T  bingen, 2001).

50 On 10 September 1726, Wolf wrote that Fabricius had completed his studies of Dio, excluding Xiphilinus: "Fabricius curas suas in Dionem Cassium, si Xiphilinum excipias, penitus absolvit." See *Thesauri epistolici Lacroziani. Tomus II. Ex Bibliotheca Iordaniana edidit Io. Ludovicus Uhlius* (Leipzig, 1743), 222.

51 In 1736, Wolf, unmistakably disgruntled about Wettstein, wrote to La Croze: "Cassius Dio Fabricii nostri, τοῦ μακαρίτων, fere ad umbilicum perductus est, et pridem lucem vidisset, nisi Wetstenius, librarius superciliosus iam ante sexennium, quando Fabricius in eo recognoscendo totus erat, diserte adfirmasset, se non ante initium operis facturum, quam totum omnibus numeris absolutum acceperit." See *Thesauri epistolici Lacroziani. Tomus II*, 269.

52 "Con tutto ci   ho per certo, che il Fabricio avesse bens   fatto molto, ma fosse ancora lontano dal compimento della sua fatica, overo, che non veramente una edizione, ma solamente avesse in animo d'illustrar quell'Istorico con note, ed osservazioni [...]; see Maffei, *Tre lettere*, 6.

53 On Bentley's significance as a classical scholar, see Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachman's Method*, ed. and trans. Glenn W. Most (Chicago, 2005), 45–57; more recently, see Kristine L. Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011), 124–54; on Bentley's pioneering work on the New Testament, see Haugen, *Richard Bentley*, 187–210.

at Reimarus's finished edition, in contrast, reveals its striking similarities to the philological work that was then practiced by Dutch advocates of Bentley's work, such as Hemsterhuis or Petrus Wesseling, who rigorously attacked the Vulgate text with a combination of conjecture and manuscript readings.

It is also plausible that Reimarus conferred with Wolf, who may have advised him on proceeding with the project, but probably discouraged him from working with the haughty Wettsteins. Nonetheless, Fabricius's difficulties with the printer may have helped Reimarus to determine what the new edition should look like and what it should include. At his disposal were not only Fabricius's notes and the main editions by Robert and Henri Estienne, but also the fragments published by Henri de Valois and the epitomes of Xiphilinus, each of which included Fabricius's marginalia.⁵⁴

Clearly, those who assumed that Fabricius's previous work needed only some polishing, which his gifted son-in-law could finish in just a few months, were mistaken. In fact, the extent of work that was still required took Reimarus by surprise as well, as he would admit ten years into the project in his public letter to Querini.⁵⁵ The exchange with the cardinal reveals that Reimarus labored almost continuously for close to fifteen years on what would become an imposing two-volume masterpiece of classical scholarship. So how did Reimarus proceed? The letters in conjunction with some of Reimarus's notes shed valuable clues on this journey,⁵⁶ marked as much by setbacks and frustrations as by bursts of enthusiasm, scholarly passion, and friendship. The most obvious task ahead was to go over Fabricius's notes on the core text of Dio, which chronicles the events from the fall of the Republic to the death of Claudius in 54 C.E. and, with the help of collated manuscripts, improve the faulty Greek text

54 See *Catalogus bibliothecae beati Herm. Sam. Reimari*, pars II, 201, no. 35 and 209, no. 86.

55 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Epistola ad Eminentissimum ac Reverendissimum D.D. Angelum Mariam Tituli S. Marci Cardinalem Quirinum* (Hamburg, 1746), 5: “Nam initio, cum praestantissimas illas Fabricii τοῦ πάντοι animadversiones ad Dionem, omni refertas eruditione vidi sem, persuabam mihi, eas et Graecis et Latinae eorum interpretationi, emendandis facile suffecturas [...]. Verum me in his plenisque spes et opinio mea fefellit; et ita fefellit, ut quo plus iam studii in hoc opere consumissem, eo plus superesse adhuc intelligerem demum.”

56 Reimarus admits in the *Epistola* that it struck him that “it happens to travelers, who, when they are sufficiently close to see the summit to which they strive, they may not see the walkways and roughness of the road in between; although the greatest distance had already been overcome, they nonetheless do not appear to be closer, but further away from the target (Accidit mihi quod viatoribus, qui arcem, quo tendunt, velut propinquam satis prospectant semper, ambages et salebras interiectas non prospiciunt; et profligato iam maximo spatio, non proprius sibi, sed longius abesse a scopo videntur) [...]” 5.

wherever necessary. In addition to the Vatican codex, Reimarus mentions in his edition two manuscript codices from the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence,⁵⁷ which he labels as *praestantissimi* [most excellent],⁵⁸ but it remains unclear how or through which channels he was able to acquire them. Given that Reimarus never made an attempt to conquer the serpentines and peaks of the Alps, conscious as he was about his weak physique,⁵⁹ there was also the technical problem of delivering the information from the Greek manuscripts from Rome to Hamburg. Although the Vatican Library had a policy of lending out books and possibly even manuscripts from its collection,⁶⁰ we know that the medieval manuscript did not leave the sacred halls for a trip to Hamburg. So what exactly was it that Reimarus received from Cardinal Querini through various book dealers? Did the cardinal have his copyists simply duplicate the entire Greek text? That would have been a possibility, but not a likely one. Copying the entire text would have been extremely tedious and not very time-efficient, and since Reimarus asks for lists of variants to any existing edition, it appears that only these variants were noted. As he wrote in September 1737, after expressing his gratitude to the cardinal for his support:

Although you had been taking care of these excellent codices, from which these passages were requested, as a skillful scholar, yet, since they are the only source from which Dio could be polished and supplemented and since the sample already furnishes a number of useful notes, I expect more and more extensive ones from the remaining portions. Therefore, please do not be concerned about irritating me, Your Eminence, in case you do not order as spontaneously as I shamelessly ask from you what you granted with kindness, namely to have the Vatican copyists also collate the remaining sections from page 30 and page 38 of Estienne's edition to codices 993 and 144 (since that is where we left off).⁶¹

⁵⁷ See "Explicatio notarum in Variis Lectionibus," in Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), xxx.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 636, note r.

⁵⁹ See chapter 2 above, note 196.

⁶⁰ See Christine Maria Grafinger, *Die Ausleihe Vatikanischer Handschriften und Druckwerke (1563–1700)* (Rome, 1993).

⁶¹ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 19 August 1737, vqs. Ms. 257: "Quanquam enim Codices, ex quibus lectiones petitae sunt, praestantiores exspectaverans Ipse, peritissimus harum rerum judex; tamen cum ii fere soli sint unde emulari aut suppleri Dio queat, cumque jam Specimen istud videatur, quasdam bonae notae lectiones exhibere, plura etiam mihi et majora ex sequentibus promitto. Quare succensere mihi noli, Domine Eminentissime, si non tam libere, quod pro Tua Clementia concessisti, quam impudentius rogo, ut reliqua

A year later, the order was well under way and almost complete, because on 5 November 1738, Reimarus informed the cardinal that he had received six sheets of collated notes covering Estienne's edition from page 1 to page 494.⁶² Since the Vatican copyists must have collated the manuscripts either to Henri Estienne's 1591 edition or the revised 1592 edition,⁶³ Reimarus probably had the entire collation in his hands no later than spring 1739. This process of sending the collation piecemeal, together with the reference to the six separate sheets of collated notes, also implies that most likely the Vatican Library's copy was used for the collation and that Reimarus did not send his own copy to have the collation made in the margins.⁶⁴ The collated material was crucial for the major task ahead, namely to emend the *editio princeps* and provide a running commentary of variant readings. The Reimarus papers in Hamburg contain a few sheets of corrections, which Reimarus labeled as *Xylandri et Leunclavii errores* in reference to the sixteenth-century Latin translators. These sheets are a testimony to Reimarus's scrupulous examination of previous editions and to his brief and concise emendations. Thus, in the context of the war between Pompey and Caesar, when fellow Romans were fighting each other, Reimarus proposes to change Leunclavius's translation of κατὰ τῆς τῶν Πωμαίων δουλείας from *adversus servitutem Romanam* [against Roman slavery] to *pro servitute Romana* [for Roman slavery]. A later note in the list suggests that the sense of ἡ ἀπιστία in the phrase ἡ δὲ δὴ πρὸς τοὺς οὐκ ὁμοήθεις ἀπιστία [distrust against those of their fellow citizens who were not of the same character] would be better expressed by *dissidentia* [contrariness, diversity], which would be a more neutral reading than the already negative *perfidia* [falsehood, dishonesty].

etiam a pag. 30 et 38 editionis Stephani, (nam eo usque ventum erat) ad Codices 993 et 144 conferri Vaticanis Scriptoribus jubeas.”

62 Letter Reimarus to Querini, 5 November 1738, vqs. Ms. 257: “[...] tum variarum lectionum ad Dionem Cassium plagulas vi. ut nunc Codicis 144. Vaticani, collationem teneam a pp. 1–494. A. editionis Stephani, Codicis autem 993 a pp. 1–37. B. eiusdem editionis [...]”

63 In his preface to the first volume, Reimarus writes: “[...] hanc Ille [Quirinus] statim insignem mihi gratiam retulit, ut Vaticanae Bibliothecae usum non offeret tantum per literas, sed praebet etiam re ipsa, duorum Dionis codicum lectiones cum Henrici Stephani editione collatas transmittens.” See Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), xxiii. § 15. page 494 in Estienne's edition from 1592 stops in the middle of Book L. Since codex 144 contains Books XXXVI–LIV and codex 993 contains Books XXXVI–LVIII, we can safely assume that the completion of the collation to the remaining four to eight books did not take more than six months.

64 The catalogue of the Vatican Library lists both editions. The 1591 edition appears under the call number “Stampati, R.I.I.545” and the 1592 edition is listed under “Stampati, Barberini. J.IX.42.”

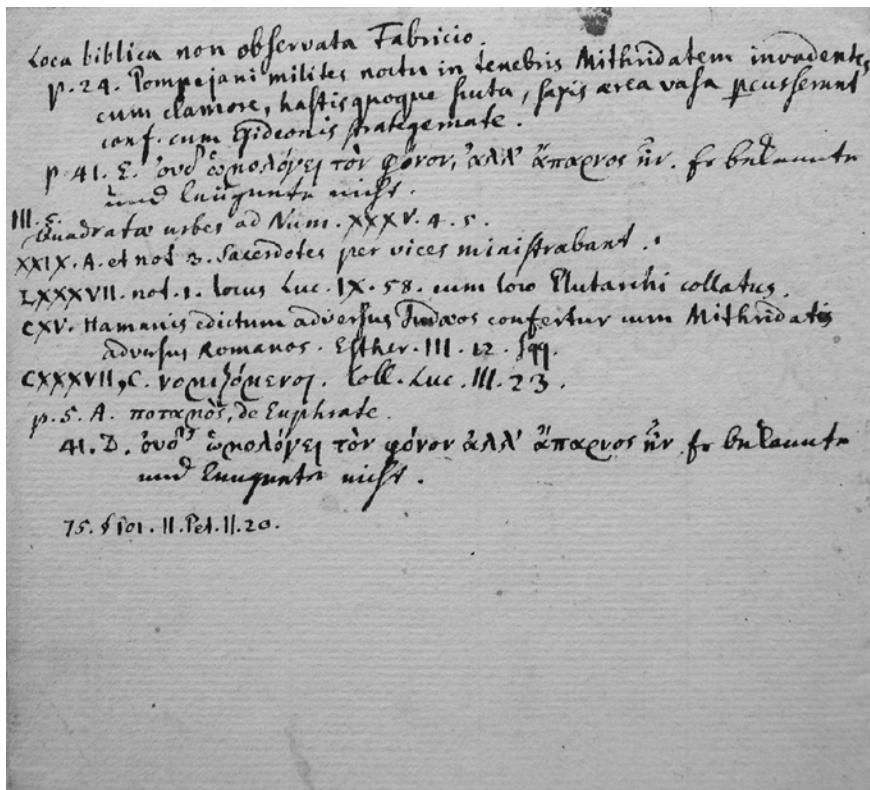


FIGURE 8 “Loca biblica non observata Fabricio”

STA HH, 622-1 REIMARUS, A 622:1: A 6: “BIBLIOGRAPHISCHE NOTIZEN ZUR SINNESPHYSIOLOGIE (VORARBEIT FÜR DIE ‘TRIEBE DER THIERE’) UND CASSIUS DIO.”
COURTESY OF STAATSARCHIV HAMBURG.

Another note rejects Xylander's translation of ἐθάρσησε μέν πως τὸν Καίσαρα into *nonnihil Caesari fidens* [Cleopatra trusted Caesar to some degree], but judges Leunclavius's correction to *Caesari animum quodammodo addidit* [Cleopatra was to some degree well-inclined toward Caesar] as much worse, so that Reimarus would eventually opt for *quod in Caesarem fiduciam quodammodo collocasset* [because she had placed a certain degree of confidence in Caesar].⁶⁵ Another sheet among these pages is labeled *loca biblica non observata Fabricio*,

65 STA HH, 622-1 Reimarus, A 6: “Xylandri et Leunclavii errores”; Reimarus refers to these examples as follows (page numbers always correspond to the Frankfurt edition of 1606, which Reimarus apparently used): “p. 181. C. κατὰ τῆς τῶν Ρωμαίων δουλείας adversus servitutem (imo pro servitutem)”; “p. 198. A. ἀπιστία non perfidia sed dissidentia”; “p. 450. C. ἐθάρσησε μέν πως τὸν Καίσαρα Xyl. nonnihil Caesari fidens: Leunclavius peius: Caesari

which suggests that Reimarus was not blindly taking Fabricius's commentary at face value, but made his own adjustments to the historical commentary wherever he felt that they were necessary. Many of these notes were incorporated into the edition and, as the note from above suggests (*loca biblica non observata Fabricio*), among them were substantial numbers of biblical references as well as works on Jewish antiquities (Fig. 8).⁶⁶

A page-by-page glance at the variant readings in Reimarus's edition reveals the meticulous and masterly correction of both Greek and Latin text. Although many of the changes often do not go beyond a simple case change or the insertion of an additional καὶ, hardly a single one of the nearly 1400 pages remains unaffected by Reimarus's scholarly hand and attentive eye. Even little changes can often render clarity to an apparently obscure passage. This is especially true for inflected languages such as Greek, where the addition of a single iota can in fact alter the meaning of an entire sentence. A good illustration how the Vatican collations enabled Reimarus to improve confusing or obscure passages appears in the context of Dio's account of Antony and Cleopatra's escape during the sea battle of Actium on 2 September 31 B.C., when both abandoned their fleet. The edition by Henri Estienne from 1592, based on the *editio princeps*, puts the key passage as follows:

ώς γάρ τότε ἐκ τῆς ναυμαχίας ἔφυγον, μέχρι μὲν τῆς Πελοποννήσου ὁμοῦ ἀφίκοντο, ἐντεῦθεν δὲ καὶ ἀκόντων αὐτῶν ἀπεχώρησαν, Κλεοπάτρα μὲν ἐς τὴν "Αιγυπτον, μή τι, τῆς συμφορᾶς σφῶν προπυθόμενοι, νεωτερίσωσιν, ἡπείχθη.⁶⁷

[They (Antony and Cleopatra) escaped the sea battle and made it together to the Peloponnese; there, they ἀκόντων αὐτῶν ἀπεχώρησαν; Cleopatra then hurried to Egypt so that they would not make any uprising, having heard beforehand about their defeat.]

The problematic part of the passage is the untranslated phrase ἀκόντων αὐτῶν ἀπεχώρησαν [they departed with/from them unwilling]. Since the verb ἀποχωρέω [withdraw, retreat] does not require the genitive, the phrase ἀκόντων αὐτῶν [with/from them unwilling] is confusing. At a first glance, there seems

animum quodammodo addidit"; see also Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), 641, l. 3–4.

66 "Loca biblica non observata Fabricio." StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 622:1: A 6: "Bibliographische Notizen zur Sinnesphysiologie (Vorarbeit für die 'Trieben der Thiere') und Cassius Dio."

67 Henri Estienne, *Dionis Cassii Romanarum Historiam Libri xxv* (1592), 510 C.

to be little doubt that the subject of ἀπεχώρησαν [they departed] is Antony and Cleopatra, but what about the ἀκόντων αὐτῶν [with/from them unwilling]? When Xylander initially translated Dio into Latin in 1557, his emendations do not make any particular mention of this passage, which suggests that the humanist did not find anything wrong with it. Instead of wondering about the identity of the ἀκόντων αὐτῶν [with/from them unwilling] and with no other subject occurring within the segment, Xylander interprets it as a reference to Antony and Cleopatra as well, which makes it into a reflexive clause:

Hi a pugna navali fuga elapsi, usque ad Peloponnesum simul quum pervenissent, ibi praeter animi sui sententiam divulsi invicem sunt, Cleopatra in Aegyptum contendente, ne clades audita novos ibi tumultus concitaret.⁶⁸

[After they (Antony and Cleopatra) escaped in their flight from the sea battle, they made it as far as the Peloponnesian together; there, they were separated from one another against their will, since Cleopatra hurried to Egypt lest the news about the defeat cause new rebellions there.]

Xylander's decision implies that he did not assume that the Greek text could be faulty here and that it was complete as such. Reimarus, on the other hand, criticizes the decision as inappropriate to both the Greek text and the historical context:

If you related it [αὐτῶν] back to Antony and Cleopatra, you would stray from the true meaning and you would go against the force of the Greek text. This is what Xylander has done [...]. Nor did Leunclavius catch this gap, which is certainly not easy without the manuscript codex.⁶⁹

Indeed, not even Leunclavius's improved Latin translation makes any mention of the passage, but leaves it reflexive as Xylander had done before him. In spite of justified criticism, because the passage should have warranted a little remark in Xylander's emendations, Reimarus was in no position to be overly harsh on a

68 I am using here the aforementioned bilingual edition of 1592 by Henri Estienne. *Ibid.*, 510 C.

69 "ad Antonium vero & Cleopatram si retuleris, a veritate aberraveris, & Greacis vim inferas, sicut fecit Xylander [...]. Neque sensit lacunam Leunclavius, quod certe nec facile est sine codice ms"; see Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), xxiii, § 15.

still plausible interpretation of the passage. Having the collation of the Vatican codices in front of him, he was able to provide a rich and marvelously elucidating addition to the text, which none of the previous humanists could have guessed. After comparing the faulty text with his collation, Reimarus changed the segment as follows:

ώς γάρ τότε ἐκ τῆς ναυμαχίας ἔφυγον, μέχρι μὲν τῆς Πελοποννήσου ὅμοι
ἀφίκοντο· ἐντεῦθεν δὲ τῶν συνόντων τινὰς ὅσους ὑπώπτευον ἀποπέμψαντες,
(πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἀκόντων αὐτῶν ἀπεχώρησαν) Κλεοπάτρα μὲν ἐς τὴν Ἀιγυπτον,
μή τι, τῆς συμφορᾶς σφῶν προπυθόμενοι, νεωτερίσωσιν, ἡπείχθη.⁷⁰

Upon realizing that the Vatican manuscript yields a combination of words that fit perfectly into the apparent gap, Reimarus concluded that “the string of words [from ἐντεῦθεν] up to πολλοὶ, were, as a common mistake of the copyists, left out from Dio.”⁷¹ The addition changes the meaning of the passage, making πολλοὶ [“many”] [viz. “of their associates”] the subject of ἀπεχώρησαν [they departed]. The relative clause ὅσους ὑπώπτευον [whom they suspected] serves as an additional piece of information, which may have been the premise of why these men were sent away [ἀποπέμψαντες]. The initially puzzling segment ἀκόντων αὐτῶν is now construed as a genitive absolute, referring to Anthony and Cleopatra, rather than a genitive of separation with ἀπεχώρησαν. Reimarus is thus able to render the entire passage into a much more lucid and elegant Latin translation:

Hi a pugna navalı fuga elapsi, usque ad Peloponnesym quum una per-
venissent, ibi quosdam sociorum itineris, quos suspectos habebant,
dimiserunt, multis etiam contra ipsorum voluntatem discendentibus.
Hinc Cleopatra in Aegyptum celeriter contendit, ne clades ante audita
novos ibi tumultus concitaret.

[Having escaped the sea battle, (Antony and Cleopatra) reached the Peloponnes together; thereupon they sent those of their associates away, whom they suspected, with many also departing against their will. Hence, Cleopatra rushed to Egypt fearing that advance news of their destruction could cause uprisings there now.]

⁷⁰ Ibid., 636 A.

⁷¹ Ibid., 636, note r: “ἐντεῦθεν δέ. verba quae sequuntur usque ad πολλοὶ δέ, saltu consueto
librariorum Dionis distracta erant, quae nunc restituimus ex cod. V. a. cuius ut consensum
cum praestantissimo Mediceo hactenus vidit lector, quoties lacunae expletæ sunt, ita
parem quoque nunc auctoritatem esse arbitrabitur, si quando eum posthac solum cogar.”

A glance at the polished Latin translation also reveals some minor changes that make the text much more readable. Starting a new sentence after *discendentibus* and replacing Xylander's ablative absolute *Cleopatra in Aegyptum contendente* with the finite construction *Cleopatra in Aegyptum celeriter contendit* takes any remaining ambiguity from the text and at the same time prepares the stage for a sharper focus on Cleopatra in what follows. Although these types of changes undoubtedly testify to Reimarus's sensitivity to both Dio's style and his own mastery of Greek, his decisions were often facilitated by the excellent resources he had at hand. These resources were not only the collated manuscripts from the Vatican and the Medicean Library, but also commentaries and notes from other scholars. In addition to Estienne, Xylander, Leunclavius, Valois, and Orsini, other scholars—such as Jacques Le Paulmier, Lambert Bos, or Jacob Gronov⁷²—had published emendations to Dio (often as a collection of philological observations on various Greek authors) in which they pointed out problematic passages and how these passages could be reinterpreted.

In 1675, after his return from travels through Italy, the Dutch humanist Jacob Gronov published his *Supplementa lacunarum in Aenea Tacticō, Dione Cassio et Arriano*, in which he made some useful and often pointed remarks on various passages in Dio. They seemed inaccurate, as Reimarus suggests, as a result of “careless copyists,” who, in the course of their work, “often slip from a verse with similar vocabulary to another one, whereby they often leave out the text between both verses.”⁷³ Gronov had already pointed out a passage in Dio that he thought was corrupted and could be corrected with the help of the Medicean codex.⁷⁴ The passage appears in the context of Dio's description of the ascent of Pompey and his war against the pirates during the last decades of the Republic. In Book xxxv, Dio records the events leading up to the *Lex Gabina* in 67 B.C., granting Pompey supreme command over all seas and coastal regions so that he could effectively deal with the pirate threat. According to Dio, the tribune Aulus Gabinius and Pompey contrived a plan in which the latter would openly display unwillingness to take over the command, whereas Aulus Gabinius would then set out to give a stirring speech

⁷² Jacques Le Paulmier, *Exercitationes in optimos auctores graecos* (Leyden, 1668); Lambert Bos, *Animadversiones ad Scriptores quosdam Graecos* (Franeker, 1715); Jacob Gronov, *Supplementa Lacunarum in Aenea Tacticō, Dione Cassio, et Arriano* (Leyden, 1675).

⁷³ Reimarus, *Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), xv, § 9: “Nam in illis ipsis libris, qui sine magna deminutione nostram aetatem attigisse videbantur, multa erant loca hiatum relinquenda; quoniam librarii securiores, inter describendum, a vocabulo unius versus ad idem vel simile vocabulum sequentis versus transsilierant [sic], intermediis neglectis.”

⁷⁴ See Gronov, *Supplementa lacunarum*, 42–43.

urging Roman citizens to bestow leadership upon him even against his will. The edition by Henri Estienne from 1592, based on the *editio princeps*, puts the key passage from Gabinius's speech in these words:

βουλοίμην μὲν γάρ ἀν πολλοὺς ἡμῖν ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας εἶναι, καὶ, εἴγε καὶ εὖξασθαι δεῖ, εὐξαίμην ἄν. ἐπεὶ δ'οὐδ' εὐχαῖς τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο ἔστιν, οὔτ' αὐτόματόν πω παραγίνεται, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ φύναι τινὰ ἀσκῆσαι τὰ προσήκοντα, καὶ παρὰ πάντα ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ χρῆσθαι, (ἄπερ που σπανιώτατα ἀν τῷ αὐτῷ ἀνδρὶ συμβαῖη) χρὴ πάντας ὑμᾶς ὅμοιθυμαδὸν, ὅταν τις τοιοῦτος εὑρεθῇ, καὶ σπουδάζειν αὐτὸν, καὶ καταχρῆσθαι αὐτῷ καν μὴ βούληται.⁷⁵

[For I wish that we had many good men and if it is necessary to pray, I would pray. Since, however, this is not a matter of prayer and it does not happen by chance to anyone, but it is necessary that someone is brought forth to exercise what is proper and that, above all, he experiences good fortune (which, I suppose, may in the rarest cases happen to the same man), it is necessary that all of you are in agreement, whenever some such man is found, to pursue him zealously and to make full use of him, even if he does not want to.]

Two parts in the passage seem unclear and presumably grammatically incorrect. If the phrase οὐδ' εὐχαῖς τὸ πρᾶγμα τοῦτο ἔστιν, which should mean “this is not a matter of prayer,” is complete as it is recorded, then the dative case in εὐχαῖς [from εὐχῇ, “prayer”] seems incorrect. Although none of his manuscripts provided an alternative reading, Reimarus discreetly replaced εὐχαῖς with the genitive singular, εὐχῆς. Xylander had already suggested this reading, but did not change the Greek text accordingly (probably because he was unable to back it up with manuscript evidence). The second correction, however, is supported by the Vatican codex and by the Medicean codex, and Gronov makes the same suggestion in his *supplementa* that Reimarus would eventually support. According to Estienne's edition, Gabinius describes the ideal candidate; implicitly, only Pompey fits that description, as follows:

δεῖ καὶ φύναι τινὰ ἀσκῆσαι τὰ προσήκοντα, καὶ παρὰ πάντα ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ χρῆσθαι [...].

[It is necessary that someone is brought forth to exercise what is proper and, above all, to experience good fortune.]

75 Henri Estienne, *Dionis Cassii Romanarum Historiarum Libri xxv* (1592), 13 B; Dio, xxvi, 27.6.

In spite of the modal verb δεῖ [it is necessary], the two infinitives φῦναι [come forth, produce] and ἀσκῆσαι [exercise, practice] seem suspiciously disconnected, although the passage is nevertheless translatable. But ideally, each of the two infinitives would have its own object and form its own unit in a sequence of coordinated relative clauses. That is exactly what Gronov suggests and Reimarus's correction does, thus rendering the passage into much smoother and probably more accurate Greek. According to the additional information provided by both the Vatican and the Medicean codex, it is necessary then for the ideal candidate:

φῦναι τινα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπιτηδείως, καὶ μαθεῖν τὰ πρόσφορα, καὶ ἀσκῆσαι τὰ προσήκοντα, καὶ παρὰ πάντα ἀγαθὴ τύχῃ χρῆσθαι [...].⁷⁶

[to be suitable for this purpose, to learn the things that are useful, to practice what is proper and, above all, to experience good fortune.]

The phrase πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπιτηδείως [suitable for it] provides the missing object and a qualifying adverb to φῦναι, and μαθεῖν τὰ πρόσφορα [learn the things that are useful] provides an entirely new piece of information that was completely missing in Estienne's edition. Although Reimarus cites in this particular example only the Medicean and Vatican codices as his sources, his references and his high regard for fellow humanists such as Gronov suggest that he often relied heavily on the pioneering work of his famous predecessors, which is certainly understandable given the magnitude of the task that lay ahead of him. Not surprisingly, the *apparatus criticus* of the finished edition is quite elaborate. It contains Wilhelm Xylander's *Annotationes in Dionem*, Friedrich Sylburg's *In Xiphilinum annotationes*, Henri Estienne's *Emendationes in Xiphilinum*, Leunclavius's *Notae in Dionem & Xiphilinum*, Fulvius Ursinus's *Notae in Dionis fragmenta*, as well as Jacques Le Paulmier's *Exercitationes ad Dionem* and Lambert Bos's *Animadversiones ad quaedam loca Dionis*.⁷⁷

Part of the task was to integrate previously discovered fragments into the text. A high priority was Falco's discovery from 1724, in which he had enthusiastically proclaimed that he "recently came across a very old codex in the Vatican Library that was certainly not unknown to the well-informed, since some part from it had already been published in the past by Fulvio Orsini," but that, "although it was mutilated and had been cut into pieces, [...] not only some more extended fragments, but altogether the complete final books from Dio's

⁷⁶ Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), 93, l. 75–77.

⁷⁷ For a complete list, see Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 2 (1752), 1374.

incomplete eighty books as well as the beginning sections of the first ones [...] could be recovered and restored.”⁷⁸ The reader should not misunderstand the statement and assume that nothing of Books LXXVIII–LXXX had existed up to that point. Unlike the first thirty-four books, which had been completely absent in the *editio princeps*, portions from the last three books, recounting the period from the death of Caracalla to parts of the rule of Severus Alexander in the 220s, had been available and were partially expanded with the epitomes by Xiphilinus and Zonaras. Given that this was a period of Roman history for which, even now, the availability of written source material is limited, the value of Falco’s supposed discovery needs no further explanation. Because Reimarus assumed that Falco had abandoned the plan of completing a new edition, it seems surprising that Reimarus did not approach him, as Querini had done with his Philastrius, to request any potentially helpful material. But no such correspondence is recorded, and from Reimarus’s later reaction we may assume that he did not contact Falco.

What Reimarus had in mind, however, becomes clear from a letter he sent to Querini in January 1746, in which he suggested a review of Falco’s publication from 1724 in the form of a public letter to the cardinal. Reimarus attached the first sheet of the proposed letter for Querini to review.⁷⁹ He also asked the cardinal to compare Falco’s little book with the actual codex from which the sixteenth-century humanist Orsini had published his fragments and which was stored in the Vatican Library. The idea was that the cardinal would write a public reply to Reimarus’s piece, which included an assessment of Reimarus’s comments on Falco’s work. Querini must have approved of the proposal, because in February Reimarus asked the cardinal if he had received five copies of the letter, with whose delivery he had commissioned a bookseller from Augsburg.⁸⁰

78 “[...] ut nuper in vetustissimum Vaticanae Bibliothecae Codicem ego inciderim, non ignotum equidem eruditis, & iam tum ab Fulvio Ursino, aliqua ex parte editum; eque ipso, quamquam mutilo ac lancinato, & ex aliis ne dum fragmenta amplius pauca, sed integros ferme tres postremos, ex octoginta Dionis libris, & primi etiam initia [...] reparare, orbique visus sim restituere”; see Falco, *Cassii Dionis Romanae Historiae ultimi libri tres reperti restitutique studio ac labore Nic. Carminii Falconis Presbyteri* (Rome, 1724), vi.

79 “[...] ausus nunc sum, quod aequi bonique, rogo, interpreteris, de ultimis libris Dionis a Cl. Falcone editis nonnulla, per modum epistolae ad Te datae, commentari. Mitto hic eius primam plagulam [...]”; letter Reimarus to Querini, 1 January 1746, vqs. Ms. 257.

80 “Spero iam reliqua epistolae folia, cum quinque eius exemplis integris, quae Augustam Vind[elicorum] missa bibliopolae cuidam commendaveram, recte Tibi redditam esse. [...] Rogo nempe, ut Viro cuidam docto, extrema Dionis a Falcone edita, denuo cum codice

So we can safely assume that publication of the *Epistola* occurred some time in mid-January.⁸¹

Although formally addressed to Querini, the category “epistle” seems deceptive. After introducing his own project, the circumstances of his inheriting it from Fabricius, and complimenting Falco for his efforts, Reimarus produced a very detailed line-by-line dismantling of Falco’s philological work, exposing grave errors in both his Greek conjectures and his Latin translations, which, mixed with often pointed remarks, borders on ridicule. Besides Falco’s claim that he had restored the last three books of Dio, he had also asserted that he had found a segment from the beginning of Dio’s first book. Reimarus, however, by then an expert on the structure of Dio’s work as well as on the available printed source material, and naturally suspicious about such claims, easily recognized:

Falco has prefixed his three last books from Dio’s Roman History with a single fragment from the first book and the table of contents of this chapter: these parts have not been obtained from the same ancient codex [...]. For he wrote in the beginning of page xxvi in his preface *Somewhere else, I have unexpectedly also come across the beginnings of the first book of Dio.* But when he writes that he *unexpectedly* found this fragment and he considered it worth the pain to edit it separately, I reckoned that it had not yet been edited. But the same one and much more can be found on page 569 among those passages in the Collection of Constantine Porphyrogenitus from the Codex Peirescianus, which Valois published.⁸²

illo antiquissimo conferenda committas”; letter Reimarus to Querini, 19 February 1746, VQS. Ms. 257.

- 81 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Epistola ad Eminentissimum ac Reverendissimum D.D. Angelum Mariam Cardinalem Quirinum... occasione edendi Dionis Cassii ad Nicolai Carminii Falconis* (Hamburg, 1746).
- 82 Ibid., 7: “Praemisti Cl. Falco tribus ultimis libris Romanae Dionis historiae, fragmentum unicum libri primi, & summa huius libri capita: quae petita non sunt ex eodem codice antiquissimo [...]. Scribit enim in praef. pp. xxvi. init. *Dionis etiam primi libri initia insperato alibi nactus sum.* At dum *insperato* se nactum ait fragmentum ipsum, idque separatim edere operae pretium duxit, colligo, eum pro inedito habuisse. Exstat autem, & plenius multo, inter fragmenta, in Collectaneis Constantini Porphyrogenetae ex codice Peiresciano publici iuris facta a Valesio, 569.”

But, after describing a similar instance that happened to Henri de Valois, he forgivingly adds:

Indeed, it happens easily even to the most learned men that they are able to regard published writings as unpublished [...]. If thus Falco had known that this fragment had already been published by Valois, he would not have sought in it the *beginnings of the first book*; because from the Peirescian fragments it becomes clear that [this fragment] treats the time of [Pompilius] Numa [the second king of Rome]. But Dio starts [his work] with the most ancient times before Romulus.⁸³

What follows, however, makes clear that Reimarus views Henri de Valois and Falco in different leagues. Reimarus's emendations are peppered with phrases such as "which Falco has changed against the nature of the Greek language"; "his Latin translation here reverses everything"; or "Falco often blames Orsini for having misread something which is actually correct." These phrases, however, are only a small element in what frequently amounts to a lengthy, sophisticated, often heavily annotated, but above all, meticulous analysis. In one of the fragments, which Falco published from Book LXXVIII, Dio recounts the emperor Bassianus's (188–217 C.E.) eccentric sense of fashion, both on and off the battlefield. Dio condescendingly describes him as a weakling, who would be able to bear neither the weight nor the heat of armor, which made him choose alternative, often outlandish vestments that eventually earned him the nickname "Caracalla." Among these garments was apparently an Oriental tunic, which Dio describes in greater detail:

χλαμύδα τε τότε μὲν ὄλοπόρφυρον, τότε δὲ μεσόλευκον, ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ μεσοπόρφυρον, ὥσπερ καὶ ἐρυθρὸν ἐφόρει·

[He (Caracalla) wore at times a cloak that was all-purple, at times one shot with white, at times one shot with purple, just as also plain red.]

83 Ibid., 7: "Verum id facile accidit etiam eruditissimis, ut pro ineditis habere possint edita, nisi recenti adhuc memoria teneant lecta [...]. Quodsi autem Falco suum illud fragmentum scivisset iam a Valesio vulgatum, *primi libri initia* in eo non quaevisisset; nam ex Excerptis illis Peirescianis manifestum est, ad Numae tempora pertinere. Dio autem orsus est a temporibus antiquissimis ante Romulum."

Falco, evidently not satisfied with Leunclavius's Latin version,⁸⁴ translates the passage as follows:

chlamydemque ex integro purpuream aliquando, aliquando vero albam ex parte, quod est nempe semipurpuream, sicuti quoque rubram gestabat.⁸⁵

[He wore a cloak that was sometimes all-purple, sometimes to a certain degree white, which means of course half-purple, in the same way as it was also red.]

Undoubtedly, the passage looks and sounds confusing. Why would Dio have taken pains to explain with a relative clause, *quod est nempe semipurpuream* [which is of course half-purple], what seems abundantly clear on its own; or *aliquando vero albam ex parte* [mostly white]? This makes the passage almost incomprehensible, especially since *albam ex parte* [to a certain degree white] and *semipurpuream* [half-purple] seem to be two different things. Obviously Falco's correction backfired, because it converted what was a straightforward passage in Greek into obscure Latin. Reimarus easily picked up on what he interpreted as an amateurish mistake:

Our [Falco] wanted to correct Leunclavius and translates ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ μεσοπόρφυρον as *quod est nempe semipurpuream* [which is half-purple]. This is indeed as if ἔστι δ' ὅτε [at times] was the same as τοῦτ' ἔστι [which means] [...]. Who would not know that in Greek instead of *interdum* [at one time], *modo* [at another time], or *aliquando* [yet another time], ἔστι μὲν ὅτε ἔστι δ' ὅτε [sometimes] or τότε [at times] or τότε μὲν, τότε δὲ [at one time ... at another] and at the third instance [in a list] ἔστι δ' ὅτε [sometimes] are used?⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Johannes Leunclavius, *Dionis Cassii Cocceiani Historiae Romanae* [...] Io. Leunclavii studio tam aucti, quam expoliti (Frankfurt, 1592), 90: "Chlamydem aliquando totam purpuream, aliquando semialbam, aliquando semipurpuream, sicut & rubram, gestabat."

⁸⁵ Falco, *Cassii Dionis Romanae Historiae ultimi libri tres reperti restitutique* [...] (Rome, 1724), 5.

⁸⁶ *Epistola*, pp. 11–12: "Noster [Falco] corriger Leunclavium voluit, ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ μεσοπόρφυρον, interpretatus, *quod est nempe semipurpuream*. Quasi vero ἔστι δ' ὅτε idem esset ac τοῦτ' ἔστι [...]. Quis enim nescit, pro *interdum*, *modo*, aut *aliquando* Graecis dici ἔστι μὲν ὅτε ἔστι δ' ὅτε, aut τοτὲ μὲν, τότε δὲ, et tertio fere loco, ἔστι δ' ὅτε?"

Indeed, just as *μέν* [on the one hand] and *δέ* [on the other hand] usually mark a contrast in Greek between two things or people, they can be supplemented by particles such as *τότε* [then; at one time] either for matters of emphasis or to determine the nature of the contrast, such as temporal or spatial. As Reimarus pointed out, since *μέν* and *δέ* are used only to contrast two groups, in this case *ἔστι δ' ὅτε* [sometimes] is used as an enumerative conjunct in reference to a third group in what is a simple parallel construction. Reimarus, however, did not leave it with just demonstrating Falco's shortcomings as a linguist. Since Falco had apparently misunderstood the passage's true meaning, Reimarus meticulously expounded it, thereby showing off his tremendous learning and familiarity with ancient antiquities and customs:

I believe that what needs to be observed above all is that this *chlamys* [cloak, mantle], which is called *μεσόλευκος* [shot with white], is generally designated by the addition *πορφυροῦς* [purple-clad, in purple]. So the clothing of the Medeans and Persians, which is called *sarapis*, is described in Pollux VII.61 as *πορφυροῦς μεσόλευκος χιτών*, *vestis purpurea medio albo colore distincta* [a purple garment with white in the middle] and Cyrus in Book VIII on page 215. B. of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* is said to have worn *χιτῶνα πορφυροῦν μεσόλευκον* [a tunic in purple shot with white in the middle]. Nor is the sense any different in Book XII. pp. 537. E. of Athenaeus [Deipnosophistae] where Alexander was, according to Persian custom, dressed in *χλαμύδα πορφυράν καὶ χιτῶνα μεσόλευκον* [a purple mantle and a tunic shot with white], where *πορφυράν* [purple-coloured] means the same as *όλωπόρφυρον* [all-purple] and *μεσόλευκον* [shot with white] is the same as *πορφυράν μεσόλευκον* [purple shot with white]. For the same Athenaeus writes in Book V. pp. 215. G. [sic] about the Epicurean Lysias, tyrant of Tarsus, *πορφυροῦν μέν μεσόλευκον χιτῶνα ἐνδεδυκώς, χλαμύδα δὲ ἐφεστρίδα περιβεβλημένος πολυτελῆ* [he put on a purple garment that was shot with white, after having wrapped himself in an expensive upper garment].⁸⁷

87 Ibid., 11–12: “[...] Puto autem ante omnia observandum esse, quod ea chlamys, quae *μεσόλευκος* vocatur, simul addito *πορφυροῦς* soleat designari. Sic *vestis Medorum et Persarum, Sarapis dicta, πορφυροῦς μεσόλευκος χιτών, vestis purpurea medio albo colore distincta*, (sic Interpres) definitur ap. Pollucem VII. 61. et Cyrus ap. Xenophontem lib. VIII. Cyrop. p. 215.B. gestasse dicitur *χιτῶνα πορφυροῦν μεσόλευκον*. Nec alio sensu ap. Athenaeum lib. XII. p. 537. E. Alexander Persico more indutus erat *χλαμύδα πορφυράν καὶ χιτῶνα μεσόλευκον*, ubi *πορφυράν* idem est quod *όλωπόρφυρον*, et *μεσόλευκον* idem quod *πορφυράν μεσόλευκον*. Nam sic idem Athenaeus lib. V. p. 215. G. de Lysia Epicureo, Tarsi

This head-spinning survey shows in an impressive way that Reimarus knew what he was talking about. As a professor of Hebrew and Oriental languages, who almost every year would teach a course in Jewish antiquities, the customs of Mediterranean and Oriental civilizations were familiar turf for him. Though scholarship on Persians, Parthians, and Medeans was, unless it touched upon the always popular field of religion or idolatry, far less vibrant than that on Greeks, Hebrews, or Romans, Reimarus could nonetheless draw on an exquisite core of helpful works. In this particular case of ancient costume, the foremost ones were probably Ottavio Ferrari's *De re vestiaria libri septem* (1654) or Albertus Rubenius's *De re vestaria veterum*, both of which were conveniently available in the sixth volume of Graevius's *Thesaurus antiquitatum romana-rum* (1694–99). Whereas Reimarus would eventually quote them in his edition, none of these scholarly works made it into his review of Falco's edition. Given the length of the letter, space did not seem to have been a matter of concern. A more plausible explanation is that referencing scholarly works was not on top of the priority list of an incredibly talented, but still relatively unknown scholar, who had not yet established himself in the Republic of Learning through his own works and needed to show just how well-skilled a linguist he was. How could he have done this any better than by showing his acute sense for the Greek language by pulling up similar instances of usage from various other Greek authors or by drawing analogous conclusions, as he does in the case of the example mentioned above, when he notes that πορφυρᾶ μεσόλευκος must be “purple that is white in the middle or is encircled by a white border” since “μεσόγαιος means in the middle of the land, μεσεντέριον refers to the part in the middle of the intestines, μεσοκράνιον is the part in the middle of the skull, μεσονύκτιον refers to the middle of the night and μεσοναῦται are the seamen who rank between the pilot and the rowers”?⁸⁸

Since this epistle is basically a long review of Falco's scholarship on Cassius Dio and given the slightly polemical tone whenever he exposed his fellow humanist's mistakes, it becomes clear that Reimarus believed that Falco had not only misunderstood individual passages, but that he lacked the skill to complete an edition which he once must have had in mind and which Reimarus himself was just about to finish. His condescending tone did not

Tyranno, πορφυροῦν μὲν μεσόλευκον χιτῶνα ἐνδεδυκώς, χλαμύδα δὲ ἔφεστριδα περιβεβλημένος πολυτελῆ [...].”

88 Ibid., 12: “Nam ita μεσόγαιος, quod medium est terra, μεσεντέριον, quod medium est intestinorum, μεσοκράνιον, quod media est cranii pars, μεσονύκτιον, quod medium est noctis, μεσοναῦται, qui medii sunt inter nautas et vectores. Ergo Et πορφυρᾶ μεσόλευκος erit purpura, quae medium tenet albi, seu fimbriam habet in circuitu albam [...]”

remain unnoticed. Despite Reimarus's deceptively polite tone toward Falco in the beginning of the letter, Querini in his public response to Reimarus characterized the *Epistola* as "a beautiful woman in the upper part, which ends in an ugly fish in the lower."⁸⁹ But Reimarus's publicity stunt did not miss its target, in either a negative or a positive sense. Given the project's past history and Reimarus's relative obscurity, it seemed invaluable to publicize his project so that other scholars would know about the planned Hamburg edition and might also provide assistance. This is why Reimarus had ended his *Epistola* with a plea to the cardinal to inquire whether other scholars in the field could kindly volunteer any information that might be helpful for the project.⁹⁰ Undoubtedly, Reimarus had been in an exceptional position. On the one hand, before 1739, which is when Johann Christoph Wolf died, he could still count on the latter's support to promote his project; and on the other hand, while preparing the auction catalogue for Fabricius's library, he remained in contact with other scholars such as the Swedish savant from Uppsala Erik Benzelius (1675–1743) and, just as he established his contact with Querini, when answering their requests, he could drop a casual note about his Dio.⁹¹ So by word of mouth, news about the project had spread throughout Europe, and scholars acquainted with the late Fabricius offered their services to his gifted son-in-law.⁹²

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- 89 The quote is from Horace, *Art. Poet.* 4: "Turpiter atrum definit in piscem mulier formosa superne"; letter Querini to Reimarus, 23 August 1746: "[...] attamen in medium afferens Animadversiones illas tuas, Falconis effigiem iis coloribus pingis, ut de eadem jure ac merito dici possit ... *Turpiter atrium Definit in piscem mulier formosa superne [...]*"; reprinted in *Epistolae Eminentiss. et Reverendiss. D.D. Angeli Mariae Quirini*, ed. Nicolaus Coleti (Venice, 1756), 284.
- 90 *Epistola*, 43: "Liceat autem hic sub Tuis auspiciis implorare Viros eruditos, ut si quid adhuc lectionum in primis variarum ex codicibus MSS. tum & emendationum aut observationum ad Dionem habeant in promptu, id conferre ad proximam editionem ne deditimentur."
- 91 On 3 December 1737, Reimarus wrote to Benzelius: "Confecto Catalogo, quod spero proxima aestate futurum, Dioni Cassio manus admovebo, flagitantibus cum Viris doctis magni nominis, tum Wetstenio et Smitho Bibliopolis Amstelodamensis. Accepi ad ornandam editionem ab eminentissimo Cardinali Quirino specimen variarum lectionum ex duplice Codice Dionis Vaticano, idemque sequentia etiam pollicitus est." See Erikson, ed., *Letters to Erik Benzelius the Younger*, vol. 2, 401.
- 92 The librarian of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, for example, wrote to Reimarus on 30 September 1738: "Equidem salleris, Vir doctissime, si hunc hominem esse opiniaris, qui idoneus aptusque ad continuando magni viri labores vel suo vel aliorum judicio aestimari queat." See letter Hans Gram to Reimarus, Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 622–1 Reimarus, A 23.

These informal efforts had already produced some results. Even before the publication of the *Epistola*, Reimarus received some additional, previously unpublished, emendations by Jacob Gronov (1645–1716) from his son Abraham, who was then librarian in Leiden; and Friedrich Menz (1673–1749), professor of philosophy at the University of Leipzig, had sent him a copy of Estienne's *editio princeps*, which he believed the French humanist Adrien Turnèbe (1512–1565) had previously owned and which contained a large number of scholarly *marginalia*.⁹³ The public letter to the cardinal, however, boosted the publicity level of his project. In February 1746, the reviewer of the *Epistola* in the local newspaper, the *Staats- und Gelehrten Zeitung des hamburgischen unparteyischen Correspondenten*, observed that its author's "diligence, learning, apt conclusions, and mature judgment" are evident in equal measure; he concluded the review by urging Reimarus to "no longer withhold the precious outcome of his efforts."⁹⁴ A few months later, in June 1746, the *Epistola* received equally high praise in the distinguished and widely distributed *Nova acta eruditorum*.⁹⁵ These developments were so encouraging that a clearly upbeat Reimarus expressed his high hopes to Querini in September 1746:

93 *Epistola*, 43–44: "Misit etiam mihi benevole Vir Politissimus, Fridericus Mentzius, Professor Lipsiensis, editionem Robertinam, quae fuerat quondam Adriani Turnebi, non paucis elegantibus in margine emendationibus insignem, praesertim in principio: nam quo magis penetro ad medium, eo magis omnia cum Xylandri emendationibus convenient. Nuper etiam Abrahamus Gronovius, Vir non Majorum magis quam suis in literas meritis clarissimus, qua solet esse humanitate, mecum communicare coepit varias lectiones ex codice Mediceo, qua in Parentis Jacobi supplementis lacunarum praeteritiae sunt: neque dubito, eum reliqua etiam, quae servat, Dioni ornando idonea, id quod publice nunc precibus ad eo contendo, suppeditaturum."

94 "Die Probe, welche der Hr. Verfasser von dieser letztern der Welt gegenwärtig mitgetheilet hat, ist unvergleichlich, und je mehr wir dieselbe in Betrachtung ziehen, je mehr werden wir überzeuget, daß der Fleiß, Gelehrsamkeit, glückliche Erfindungen und reife Beurtheilungskraft auf allen Seiten in gleicher Stärke hervorleuchten [...]. Wir erkühnen uns denselben hermit zum Besten der gelehrten Welt inständig zu ersuchen, seinen Schatz aus gar zu grosser Sorgfalt nicht länger zurück zu halten, und wünschen, daß er die Früchte seiner rühmlichen Bemühung baldigst, und viele Jahre reichlich geniessen möge." See *Staats- und Gelehrten Zeitung des hamburgischen unparteyischen Correspondenten* 18 (1 February 1746).

95 *Nova acta eruditorum* (June 1746), 321–27: "Suscepit enim has in sex partes eruditissimus Reimarus, gener, socero suo hoc in literarum genere non minor, sed par, omnino censendus, quemamodum praesens testatur Epistola missa ad Eminentissimum Cardinalem Quirinum [...]. Tam justo desiderio Cl. Autoris & nostra jungimus vota, & pro eo ac debemus compellamus eadem de causa tantis possessionibus divites viros, ut excellentissimus Auctor Greacus tandem aliquando pristino splendori restituatur."

I hope with confidence that [all of Italy] will not deny to my meager little work help, after it has pleased You not only to spread my request in Your letters, but also to appeal for this project to foremost men of human learning, most specifically Vulpius, Muratori, Bartolus, Riccius, and Mazochius.⁹⁶

And the learned community did respond, though often through detours. In June 1746, Reimarus wrote a letter to the Westphalian humanist Petrus Wesseling, a former pupil of Jacob Gronov, who was then professor of eloquence, history, and Greek at the University of Utrecht. Wesseling was a brilliant Greek scholar who had just published his highly praised edition of Diodorus Siculus. After commanding Wesseling for his excellent work, Reimarus came straight to the point:

[...] David Ruhnken, a young man of great quality and promise, has persuaded me to contact you with this letter. For he has indicated that you have several observations on Dio that grew out of your readings and he has expressed the possibility that I may perhaps without any difficulty procure them from your generosity. The reason why I took this interrupted project of Fabricius's on, I believe, [...] you have learned from my public letter to Cardinal Querini.⁹⁷

96 Letter Reimarus to Querini, 17 September 1746, vqs. Ms. 257: "Pariter et Italianam omnem, [...] spero iam confidentius tenui meae opellae non denegaturam auxilium, postquam Tibi placuit, mea desideria non tantum vulgare literis Tuis, sed et principes doctrinae humanioris Viros, Vulpium, Muratorium, Bartolum, Riccium, Mazochium, nominatim ad beneficii huius praestantionem evocare." The scholars mentioned were probably Johann Baptist Vulpius, Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Giuseppe Bartoli, Angelo Maria Riccius, and Alexius Symmacus Mazochius.

97 Letter Reimarus to Wesseling, 17 June 1746, Leiden University Library, *BPL* 336: "Cum dudum Tibi, Vir Celeberrime, cuperem commendari captus admiratione ingenii et doctrinae, plurimis Tuis scriptis et nuper aeterno Diodori Siculi monumento testatae: nunc vel maxime, ut Te adirem his literis, persuasit Vir Iuvenis paeclarae indolis et spei Davides Ruhnkenius. Is enim significavit, habere Te nonnullas ad Dionem Cassium animadversiones inter legendum subnatas, addiditque spem, forte, ut eas abs Tua humanitate haut ita difficulter impetrarem. Quam ob rem, dum in eo Scriptore recensendo, post interruptam Summi Fabricii operam, vursor, uti puto Te ex epistola mea ad Eminentissimum Quirinum intellexisse [...]."

It is not entirely clear how the contact between David Ruhnken (1723–1798)⁹⁸ and Reimarus had been established or if they knew each other personally. No letters between the two men have been discovered, but the available evidence suggests that the contact may have been closer. One possibility could have been that Johann August Ernesti (1707–1781), whom Reimarus knew well and who was mentoring Ruhnken while he was a student at Wittenberg, put the two men in touch with each other. Another possible connection is Johann Matthias Gesner (1691–1761), who had remained a close friend of Reimarus's ever since their common student days at the University of Jena and whose student Ruhnken almost became before he settled on Wittenberg instead of Göttingen. At a very young age Ruhnken had impressed both Ernesti and Hemsterhuis, whose foremost protégé he would become after Ernesti recommended him to study under Hemsterhuis at Leiden. Ruhnken was probably introduced to Wesseling through Hemsterhuis, who kept mentoring Wesseling, equally a former student of his, even after his appointment as professor of history and Greek at the University of Utrecht in 1735.

Ruhnken's advice paid off. Although we do not know how much of his own work Wesseling actually sent, Reimarus had a letter reprinted in the appendix to the second volume of his *Cassius Dio*, in which Wesseling makes some valuable comments on the first volume of Reimarus's *Dio*.⁹⁹ Some evidence suggests that Reimarus received additional feedback from Tiberius Hemsterhuis because on 5 February 1748, Reimarus informed Querini that the latter had promised to send his own critical observations as well.¹⁰⁰ The same letter mentions that Richard Mead (1673–1754), then already chief royal physician, would send the Codex Oddianus or, more precisely, whatever work the virtually unknown English scholar Obadiah Oddey had done for the edition that had been announced in the *Acta eruditorum* in 1712 but had never actually been published.¹⁰¹ It is certain that Mead responded favorably because in his

98 On Ruhnken, see Richard Hoche, "Ruhnken, David," in *ADB* 29 (1889), 615–24.

99 Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 2 (Hamburg, 1752), 1500–1501.

100 Letter Reimarus to Querini, 5 February 1748, vqs. Ms. 257: "Promisit Rich[ard] Meadius codicem Oddianum, promisit Burgius Codicem Breslaviensem Xiphilini, promisit Hemsterhusius observationes suas."

101 On Richard Mead, see Arnold Zuckerman, "Dr. Richard Mead (1674–1754): A Biographical Study" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1965); also Craig Ashley Hanson, *The English Virtuoso: Art, Medicine, and Antiquarianism in the Age of Empiricism* (Chicago, 2009), 157–93.

preface Reimarus extends his gratitude to Mead for forwarding a copy of Henri Estienne's edition with Oddey's conjectures in the margins.¹⁰²

This English connection, however, remains puzzling. First of all, it is not clear what or who made Reimarus contact Mead and in what ways Mead was instrumental in securing these sources. One possible link between Reimarus and Mead could have been William Murray, who was at one point Anglican minister for the Church of the English Court in Hamburg and who, during his travels between Hamburg and England, would often obtain books or deliver messages for Reimarus.¹⁰³ Even after eventually settling down in Gainsborough, Murray still maintained a correspondence with Reimarus and, as a friend of the Oxford Hebraist Benjamin Kennicott, served as a go-between for the two men later on.¹⁰⁴ Since Reimarus never refers to Oddey directly, either in his letters to Querini or in his acknowledgments, it may very well be that Oddey was already deceased by then, which would explain why Reimarus did not contact Oddey directly. But it remains unclear what the relationship between Mead and Oddey was and how Reimarus learned about it. A letter from Reimarus to Mead in the Hamburg University Library, rather than helping to clarify the relationship triangle, adds to the confusion by making it a rectangle. The letter reveals that Reimarus urged Mead to mediate between him and a certain "Chapmannus,"¹⁰⁵ who must have had an equally strong interest in Dio. After assuring both Mead and Chapman that he would "proceed in this affair as men of honor do" and "insert these critical observations and notes among those of

¹⁰² Reimarus, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae*, vol. 1 (1750), xxv: "Praeterea cum legissem in Actis Eruditorum 1712. pp. 528. Angulum eruditum Obadiam Oddey de nova quadam editione Dionis cogitasse, eiusque adeo specimen edidisse, audissemque, manu eius notatum exemplum esse penes Richardum Meade, Medicum Regis Britanniarum Experientissimum, eumque recondita non minus eruditione quam officiosa comitate celebratissimum, egi cum eo per literas, ut iam & Dioni medicinam, seu materiam certe medicam Oddeyanam, benebole impertiret: quod & mihi gratificatus est transmissio Dionis exemplo editionis Henrici Stephani [...]."

¹⁰³ See SUB HH: LA Reimarus: 5–6: Letter Reimarus to Richard Mead, 4 February 1748: "[...] Quodsi voles librum, eius annotationibus insignem, Nobilissimo Stockdilio tradere, is rogatu amici sui Pl. Rev. Murray, qui apud nos est Verbi Divini Minister Anglicus, curabit, ut tempestate opportuna et tuto ad me perveniat, eodem modo aliquando Tibi restituendus [...]."

¹⁰⁴ See letter Murray to Reimarus, 18 March 1762, StA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 23.

¹⁰⁵ Possibly John Chapman (1705–1784), a theologian and classical scholar; see John Westby-Gibson, "Chapman, John (bap. 1705, d. 1784)," rev. M.J. Mercer, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5121>, accessed 4 Dec 2013].

Fabricius and his own without mocking them," Reimarus points out that the decision was now up to both Mead and Chapman as to whether "it is better and more convenient that we either are engaged in polishing Dio as separate projects, each according to his own ability, or that we work together for the public good by comparing our work amicably."¹⁰⁶ In order to bolster his case and to prove his skill, Reimarus provided a sample of one of his emendations and attached a few more to his letter.¹⁰⁷ It is likely that the request for Oddey's notes and Chapman's collaboration are two different issues¹⁰⁸ and that Mead served as a mediator for both, because the letter to the cardinal in which Reimarus mentioned that Mead had promised to send Oddey's observations was written only one day after Reimarus sent his plea to Mead to intervene on his behalf

¹⁰⁶ See SUB HH: LA Reimarus: 5–6: Letter Reimarus to Richard Mead, 4 February 1748: "Ea certe qua viri honesti solent fide polliceor, si ita ut ostendi visum fuerit Amico Tuo, velle me sub eius nomine, et ipsius verbis, sine ulla cavillatione, emendationes et annotationes illius Fabricianis aut meis inserere [...]. Tuo, Vir Humanissime, ipsiusque Doctissimi Chapmanni iudicio relinquo, utrum praestet placeat magis, an ut separatis scriptis, pro sua quisque facultate, in poliendo Dione versemur, an ut in commune et ad publicam utilitatem collatis studiis nostris amice laboremus [...]."

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.: "Incidi nuper in locum Dionis pp. 813. D. edit Leuncl. vel pp. 280. B. Xiphilini ab H. Stephano editi 1592. fol. emendationem et interpretationem novam tentans. Senatus Marco et Faustinae decernit ἐν τῷ Ἀφροδίσιῳ τῷ Ρώμαιῷ εἰκόνας ἀργυρᾶς ἀνατεθῆναι, καὶ βωμὸν ἰδρυθῆναι κ.τ.λ. Interpres: *statuas argenteas Romae in templo Veneris collocari*. Sed quoniam Senatus de alio templo Veneris non facile cogitare poterat, quam qui Romae esset, Romae autem plurima Veneris templia fuerunt, illud Ρώμαιῷ hoc sensu frigidum nec ad templum definiendum sufficiens videtur. Quare Ρώμαιον potius crediderim esse *templum Roma Dea*, sicut Σιρηάδιον, Νυριγάδιον, Διδυριαδίον et sexcenta alia. Enimvero templum Veneris et Remae, τῆς Αφροδίτης τῆς τε Ρώμης ναὸν, haud pridem Hadrianus primus in urbe extruxerat, teste Dione pp. 789. D. Leuncl. ed. Probabile igitur est, in iis templis statuas Marci et Faustina collocatas esse, et ante templis, qua velut βυννάῶν [sic] θεῶν coniuncta ea unam communem aram collocatam, in qua sponsi et sponsa facerent. Prudentius Dioni lucem praebet debetque L.II.221 [...]—Urbis Venerisque parise culmine tollunt Templas, simul geminis adolescentur thura Deabus. Scripsit igitur Dio: ἐν τῷ Ἀφροδίσιῳ τῷ τε Ρώμαιῷ, ubi librariis de alia quam adjectiva vocis potestate non cogitantibus, posterius τε velut superfluum et inconcinnum resecare visum est. Specimen aliud Dionis editum huic epistolae adjeci, de quo tamen monendum est, typum adhuc recentem et magis luculentum ad textum gr. lat. parari."

¹⁰⁸ This seems to be confirmed by the first sentence in the letter, in which Reimarus thanks Mead both for granting his wish and for pleading on his behalf with Chapman: "Expectationem, de Tua, Vir Celeberrime, humanitate conceptum dudum, nupera responsione Tua cumulate explevisti, annuens non tantum ipse desiderio meo, sed et id agens apud Pl. Rev. Chapmanum, ut non refragante illo beneficium istud mihi concessum videatur."

with the apparently obstinate Chapman. The exact outcome of this deliberation is unknown. Chapman, however, did not receive the honor of being favorably mentioned in Reimarus's acknowledgments, nor does his name appear in Reimarus's critical apparatus, which may suggest that Chapman eventually decided against collaborating.

If our assumption is correct, then this was not the only damper in Reimarus's pursuit of getting both help and recognition. This brings us back to the situation in December 1746, when we learn from his notably angry response to Querini that Falco had taken up his Dio project again. There is little doubt that the news hit Reimarus out of the blue, as an earlier letter to the cardinal testifies, where, after the publication of his *Epistola*, an overly confident Reimarus discards any possibility of a rebuttal of his arguments by Falco:

The outstanding man [Falco] will more easily reckon to charge himself with bragging rather than to respond on the heel. But I do not protest in order to prevent him from responding if he freed himself from the suspicion of such grave error; but from my piece he has learned about the mistakes his Dio contains. Nor will I wonder if, after twenty-two or more years he could have more of a sense than I about how one could put a Dio together [...]. For the rest, with your permission, undeterred by the task under way, I press on and I am therefore convinced that no response can come from Falco [...].¹⁰⁹

Reimarus may have overestimated the impact of his elucidations on Falco. As we have seen, some of his comments were quite humiliating, but they may very easily have been the trigger for Falco to resume his work, both to rehabilitate himself and, in the spirit of true sportsmanship, to spoil Reimarus's day. Reimarus's resolve, however, seems unshaken. Too much had already been invested into this project. Almost instantly, however, the entire episode took a few more positive turns in Reimarus's favor anyway. Within the same month,

¹⁰⁹ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 17 September 1746, vqs. Ms. 257: "[...] ut Vir iste optimus facilius sibi exprobari aliquid jactantiae, quam calcar ad respondentum addi, existimaverit verit. Neque tamen ego intercedo, quominus respondeat, si non se tantum erroris suspicione liberare, sed et meo scripto refellendo lucem Dione afferre norit. Neque mirabor, si sapere iam me plus possit, postquam duos et viginti annos, atque adeo amplius, in uno Dione limando collocarit [...]. Ceterum, Tua etiam auctoritate, imperterritus coepito labori insisto, itaque mihi persuasi, nihil responderi a Falcone posse [...]."

the cardinal was able to get back to Reimarus about the ancient codex in the Vatican Library from which Falco's publication had sprung. Having compared the parchment with both Orsini's earlier publication and Falco's publication from 1724, Querini, "after studying the codex day and night throughout the entire month of October," reported that Falco had been completely exaggerating his claim and that his negligible additions did not measure up to his boastful announcement of a recovery of the last three books of Cassius Dio.¹¹⁰ The news energized Reimarus, who, not without some malice, expressed his surprise how "often Falco had strayed from the correct reading of his codex."¹¹¹ At the same time, while continuing his own work, Reimarus wanted to wait for Falco's edition so that he could incorporate it into his own. He was certain that his public letter to the cardinal had put the learned world into the "right mindset" of what it could expect from a man like Falco.¹¹² The cardinal was able to pull some strings on his behalf and by early April 1747, Reimarus was able to take a look at some samples from Falco's newly restored Dio. But what he saw on those loose sheets barely resembled what he had expected. It seemed eerily familiar and nothing at all like Dio.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Letter Querini to Reimarus, 14 December 1746: "Codicem illum Vaticanum per integrum mensem Octobrem diurna, nocturnaque manu a me versatum fuisse primo loco affirmare possum, adhibitis ad eam rem non oculis tantum, & diligentia, sed, pro tenuitate ingenii mei, eruditione, judicio, sagacitate, ac ferme divinatione [...]," in *Epistolae Eminentiss. et Reverendiss. D.D. Angeli Mariae Quirini* (Venice, 1756), 291–97.

¹¹¹ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 24 December 1746, vqs. Ms. 257: "Evidem sic acquiescebam in Tua sollicitudine et cura pro mea Dionis editione, ut nunciatus Cl. Falconis ausus meam alacritatem non frangeret sed intenderet, neque novo mihi incitamento ad perficiendum laborem opus esse videretur [...] Verum, quod significabam proxime, cupio prius, neque id quidem leviter, videre quae edidit Falco: atque hoc magis magisque non tam opus mihi, sed prope necesse esse, perspicio. Dedi quidem id negotii amico cuidam, qui cum bibliopola Italo commercium exercet literarum [...]. Etiam ex Epistola Tua novissima perspexi, Falconem saepiuscule a vera lectione illius ipsius codicis aberrasse."

¹¹² Ibid.: "Interim oportune mihi videor, in epistola mea, Viros Eruditos, quibus ultimorum librorum editio Romana non ad manus erat, iis instruxisse argumentis, ex quibus iam de futura integri Dionis editione Neapolitana judicium queant capere."

¹¹³ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 8 April 1747, vqs. Ms. 257: "Pergratum mihi fuit, Tuo, Cardinalis Eminentissime, beneficio oculis usurpare specimen restituti Dionis Falconianii; quo perfecto intellexi statim, non facile esse, si erratis typographorum vel librariorum discesseris, quod in Graecis queat desiderari, quae mihi, ut Falconis verbo utar, non Dionem quidem, sed tamen antiquum scriptorem Graecum olebant."

It came to my mind to take a look at Plutarch's *Poplicola* [...]. Immediately, I caught the man in the act: I recognized that every single part, with the exception of the defects of the edition or the excerpts from the Latin version, has been copied from Plutarch pp. 101. section F onwards [...]. It makes me wonder how any scholar, who takes up the task of reviewing the edition, would not have noticed these robberies?¹¹⁴

What Reimarus describes here as villainy may not have been a decision of ill intentions. It was a conscious—but bad—decision based upon the argument that Dio may have plagiarized from Plutarch. Henri de Valois had already raised this possibility when he published his fragments in 1634,¹¹⁵ and even modern scholarship has recognized Plutarch as a potential source for Dio.¹¹⁶ Valois's reference, however, served as Falco's premise to look at various segments in Plutarch and insert them in chronological order into Dio's *History*.¹¹⁷ Although Reimarus was even prepared to acknowledge the potential usefulness of other classical authors besides the two Byzantine epitomators Xiphilinus and Zonaras to patch the gaps in Dio, he was outraged by Falco's uncritical and

¹¹⁴ Ibid.: "Venis igitur in mentem Plutarchi Poplicolam consulere [...]. Statim deprehendo hominem ipso in furto: nam omnia et singula, ne ipsis quidem vitiis editionis, aut versione latina excerptis, ex Plutarcho pp. 101. F. sq. video esse hoc translata [...]. Quemadmodum vero mirari subit, Virum eruditum, qui recensendae editionis curam in se suscepit, haec latrocinia non animadvertisse [...]."

¹¹⁵ See, for example, appendix to Henri de Valois, *Polybii Diodori Siculi Nicolai Damasceni Dionysii Halicar. Appiani Alexand. Dionis et Ioannis Antiocheni excerpta ex collectaneis Constantini Augusti Porphyrogenetae Polybii* [...] (Paris, 1634), 91, where de Valois writes in regard to a particular segment: "Sic in codice nostro exaratum est, cum tamen τῶν ἔργων legendum sit ex Plutarcho in Sulla. ex quo haec & sequentia quatuor capita ad verbum transcritbit Dio. Sed & caput 34. & 37. legationum ex Dionis historia Excerptarum, similiter exscripta sunt ex eiusdem Plutarchi Sulla. Adeo furaces & plagiarii Graeci fere omnes deprehenduntur [...]."

¹¹⁶ Fergus Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford, 1964), 34.

¹¹⁷ "Sed magna adhuc lumina & incrementa Dionis deerant, eaque forte fortuna in Plutarcho detego, dum Valesii verba lego [...]. Nam confestim Plutarchum sumo, & cum, ne dum allegata a Valesio ibi invenio, sed omnem propemodum Sullae vitam, inde exscriptam video a Dione; Excerpta statim loco moveo, quem obtinebant, & ad calcem paginarum, de more meo, rejicio: restituoque hoc pacto, ad duos ferme libros, Dionem. Interim, quod suapte evenire natura, in ejusmodi solet, occasionibus; hinc mihi animus excitatur, ad explorandum, num & alibi quoque Plutarchus apud Dionem lateat: ut sic restitui satius Dio queat." See "Prolegomena," in Falco, *Q. Cassii Dionis Coccejani Romanae Historiae ex ejus octoginta libris tomus primus* (Naples, 1747), a 4.

exaggerated use of this technique, especially since the latter inserted large chunks from well-known works by Plutarch and Zonaras into Dio, trying to sell these parts as genuinely recovered segments from the *Roman History*.¹¹⁸ There was no need for Reimarus to worry that Falco's edition would receive unjustified praise. After Scipione Maffei reviewed the first volume, containing the first twenty-one books of Falco's Cassius Dio in November 1748, it became clear that it would remain the only volume.¹¹⁹ Just as Reimarus suspected, Maffei had no problem exposing the edition's weaknesses. "How surprised," he wrote, "is one once he encounters after Falco's much trumpeted *Quod felix, faustumque sit, Cassii Dionis Historiae habemus libros* [What great a fortune to have the books of Cassius Dio's *Roman History*!] the works of Zonaras and Plutarch presented as those by Dio."¹²⁰ Four years later, Johann Jacob Reiske would express this sentiment in less flattering terms when, after telling a friend that he did finally have a chance to look at the notorious Falco edition, he marveled "how [this man] could have sold these most lously patched holes from Zonaras and Plutarch as a work of Dio!"¹²¹

But Maffei's epistle proved something else, which was much more important for Reimarus. Before addressing Falco's recent publication, Maffei provided a brief account of Falco's first publication from 1724 and how Reimarus, whom Maffei calls a "bravo Graecista," had refuted much of it in his *Epistola* to the cardinal. This was the sort of public recognition Reimarus had undoubtedly hoped for. Thereupon and not without much pride, Reimarus wrote to Querini:

¹¹⁸ See letter Reimarus to Querini, 8 April 1747, vqs. Ms. 257: "Verum, inquiet Falco, male nos haec Plutarcho vindicare, cum et Dio soleat (v.g. in fragmentis prioribus) Plutarchum excrivere. Solet, scio, idque animadverti in locis quibusdam, de quibus silet Ursinus atque Leunclavius; sed nullo in loco, praesertim tam longo, qualis de Poplicola est, ita omnia ad amussim cum editis Plutarchi conspirant, quin subinde corrigendi et supplendi Dionis ex Plutarcho, aut vicissim Plutarchi ex Dione detur materia. [...] Quae in Zonara uncis circumscrispsit Falco, ipsa sunt Plutarchi verba, vel ut ille nugatur, Dionis."

¹¹⁹ Maffei, *Tre Lettere*, 5–25.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 16: "Ma quanto rimane attonito chi dopo la trompa festiva, *Quod felix, faustumque sit, Cassii Dionis Romanae Historiae habemus libros*, si vede presentare come di Dione scritti di Zonara, e di Plutarco?"

¹²¹ Letter Reiske to Johann Stephan Bernard, 9 May 1752: "Mirum est qui potuerit homo ille lacinias Zonarae et Plutarchi miserabilem in modum consutas pro Dionis opere venditare. O impudentes homines!" See Johann Jacob Reiske's *Briefe*, ed. Richard Foerster (*Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Classe der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*) (Leipzig, 1897), 455.

I have no doubt that you have seen those three epistles, which the Illustrious Marchese Scipione Maffei has recently published. The first one, which reviews the newly restored Dio, also mentions my judgment in my review of Falco's last three books of Dio. I am completely honored by the unparalleled praise bestowed upon me, especially since it comes from a man of such exquisite learning and reputation.¹²²

The stage had thus been appropriately prepared for the publication of Reimarus's edition. But before it hit the press, history almost seemed to repeat itself. Just like his father-in-law, Reimarus initially experienced frustrations in finding a printer. In October 1744, Reimarus had complained to Querini about the excessive stipulations of the Dutch printer Jean Neaulme.¹²³ When the French invaded the Dutch Republic in April 1747 in the course of the War of Austrian Succession and civil unrest increased, Reimarus's search for a publisher seemed to him to have hit a dead end because all the prestigious Dutch printing houses, including Neaulme and Wettstein, with the specter of war looming over them, expressed regrets for being unable to take on Reimarus's project.¹²⁴ With his options greatly diminished, Reimarus eventually was able to convince the local printer Christian Herold to publish his work.¹²⁵ Given the outcome, probably neither printer nor author regretted this decision. Finally in September 1749 and approximately one year later than anticipated,

¹²² See letter Reimarus to Querini, 5 July 1749, vqs. Ms. 257: "Vidisti procul dubio Illustrissimi Marchionis Scipionis Maffeji epistolas tres haud pridem editas, quarum prima, dum de nupera editione restituti Dionis fert judicium, meae quoque in tres postremos Dionis libros Falconis studio vulgatos, stricturae facit mentionem: honorifice omnino, quod quidem singulari mihi laudi, praesertim ab exquisitae eruditio[n]is et famae Viro tributum, duco."

¹²³ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 8 October 1744, vqs. Ms. 257: "Habes autem hic Neaulmii ipsius epistolam, qua suam in rescribendo tarditatem excusat, sed duram hanc mihi legem imponit, *de mettre tout dans sa perfection et derniere perfection.*"

¹²⁴ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 22 November 1747, vqs. Ms. 257: "Nam dum bibliopole meo in Belgio auctor sum, ut iam iam omnia in vernum tempus anni proximi ad editionem Dionis compareret, ille tergiversari, metumque belli imminentis causari incipit. Ago rursus per D'Orvillum cum aliis, Wetstenio, Langerakio, ut ipsi alias vel maxime pares negotio, operam suam instituto commoden: omnes vero, Hannibalem ante portas suas esse Musis infestum, quasi compacto, respondent."

¹²⁵ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 5. February 1748, vqs. Ms. 257: "Nunc quoniam Heroldus mutavit consilium, et fortunam libelli expectandam sibi duxit, illud quoque nequicquam à me scriptum sit."

Reimarus was able to send Querini two copies of page proofs.¹²⁶ Still in the same year the *Göttingische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen* announced the imminent publication of the Hamburg Dio edition and numbered it among the gems of Germany and its times.¹²⁷ When the first volume was then officially published in 1750, national and international reception was unanimously positive, and it was no different two years later when the second volume appeared. Practically all reviewers were very pleased with Reimarus's efforts of correcting Leunclavius's Latin translation and restoring the Greek text.¹²⁸ One reviewer noted particularly Reimarus's discreet bracketing of insertions into the text from outside sources such as Xiphilinus or Zonaras.¹²⁹ The German press praised the work, even from an aesthetic point of view, as testimony that "not only Holland and England were able to produce skilled scholars and excellent editions of ancient writers."¹³⁰ But even twenty years later and entirely unprejudiced by nationalist enthusiasm, the English scholar Edward Harwood in his classical bibliographical study noted that after reading Reimarus's

¹²⁶ Letter Reimarus to Querini, 8 October 1749, vqs. Ms. 257: "Duo nempe exempla ligata, alterum charta majori, alterum vulgari, capsula linea inclusa, et linteo cerato probe munita contra tempestatis injurias, die xxvii. Septembris Lipsam ad Jo. Henr. Wolfium, mercatorem, ut jusseras, misi."

¹²⁷ *Göttingische Zeitungen von Gelehrten Sachen*, 29 December 1749 (129), 1027: "Wir tragen wenigstens kein Bedenken dieses Werk unter die größten Zierräihen [sic] Deutschlands und dieser Zeiten zu rechnen, man mag es auf einer Seite betrachten auf welcher man will."

¹²⁸ *Journal des Scavans*, August 1751, 522: "Après cette digression M. Reimar rend compte de tout ce qu'il a fait pour rétablissement du texte & pour la correction de la traduction Latine de Dion. Il paroît n'avoir négligé aucun secours pour rendre son édition parfaite."

¹²⁹ *Zuverlässige Nachrichten von dem gegenwärtigen Zustande Veränderung und Wachsthum der Wissenschaften* 1752 (154), 515: "Die einzeln Stücken die sich in den sogenannten Excerptis peirescianis und Legationum, oder Fulvii Ursini fanden, and gehörigen Orte und Stelle eingerückt, dabey aber die wohlangebrachte Vorsicht gebraucht, die eingerückten Fragmenta mit Klammern einzufassen, damit man sogleich wissen könne, was in den gemeinen Ausgaben des Xiphilini zu finden sey oder nicht." The anonymous reviewer was probably Johann Jacob Reiske, who wrote on 20 December 1749 in a letter to his friend Johann Stephan Bernard in Amsterdam: "Nuper recensui in Actis Germanicis novum Dionem Cassii Reimari. Mittam ubi prodierit et occasio fuerit oblata. Splendida et bona est editio, [...]." See *Johann Jacob Reiske's Briefe*, ed. Foerster, 365.

¹³⁰ *Zuverlässige Nachrichten*, 513–14: "Wir freuen uns, daß Deutschland ein Werk zu Stande gebracht, welches ihm Ehre macht, und zu einem Beweise dienen wird, daß nicht allein Holl-und Engelland fähig sind, geschichte Criticos und düchtige Ausgaben alter Schriftsteller hervor zu bringen."



FIGURE 9 *Dedicatory engraving to Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini by C. Fritzsch. [1749]. From Reimarus, Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae quae supersunt, vol. 1 (Hamburg, 1750).*
COPY IN POSSESSION OF AUTHOR

edition twice, he had come to the conclusion that it is “one of the most correct and valuable Greek books ever published.”¹³¹

Reimarus, however, was well aware to whom he owed much for his newly accomplished fame and did not fail to pay homage. The first page of the dedication is preceded by a thoughtful engraving (Fig. 9). The center of it shows an obelisk as a symbol of eternal life, and it is adorned with the portrait of Cardinal Querini. On each side of the obelisk and slightly in the background, there are two small architectural images. The one on the left shows the Duomo Nuovo or “New Cathedral of Brescia,” which, though finished finally in 1825, long after the cardinal’s death, was a project dear to Querini’s heart. A closer look at the image reveals a number of statues to the left of the cathedral. The foremost one, with a miter and shepherd’s staff, could be a reference to the fourth-

¹³¹ Edward Harwood, *A View of the Various Editions of the Greek and Roman Classics* (London, 1778), 81.

century Brescian bishop Saint Philastrius, whose *De Haeresibus liber* served as the starting point for Querini's correspondence with Reimarus. The second architectural image in the background to the right shows the corridors of the Vatican Library, a clear homage to Querini's service to the Republic of Learning in his capacity as its librarian. The obelisk is surrounded by four barefoot female figures. It is flanked on the left by a figure holding a cornucopia upside down, spilling rosaries and medallions: possibly Concordia uniting both sacred and secular authority. The figure on the right is pointing with her hand to an open book, while other books are piled at her feet. Another figure, slightly bowed, is approaching the obelisk from the left, bringing an open book on a pillow. The standing figure could thus be a reference to secular learning and erudition, personified by Sapientia, whereas the approaching figure may represent sacred learning, both of which were unified in Querini's erudition. Seated in front of the obelisk is another female figure, a flame on top of her covered head; she holds a cross in one hand and a church in the other. This may be Fides, in reference to the cardinal's ecclesiastical office and service to the Church.

Querini's overwhelming presence in the edition, however, does not mean that Reimarus expresses less gratitude to his father-in-law, who started the project. Aside from making unequivocally clear in his preface that most of the historical commentary was his father-in-law's, a magnificent Baroque engraving of Fabricius adorns the frontispiece of the first volume (Fig. 10). But despite this bow toward his mentors and benefactors, there should be no doubt that Reimarus had matured into a self-confident and, as we have seen, combative scholar. A proof of this self-confidence is certainly his decision to make an engraving of himself the frontispiece to the second volume.

The publication of Cassius Dio serves as a watershed event in Reimarus's career. On the one hand, it represented his first major publication on a grand international scale. It not only placed him on the map of international scholarship, but also provided admittance into the pantheon of German classical scholarship, populated by such outstanding figures as his famous father-in-law, Johann Matthias Gesner, and Johann Jacob Reiske. The offer to replace the deceased Gesner in Göttingen is no small proof of that.¹³² In the course of this project, Reimarus was able to establish contacts with an illustrious community of classical scholars such as Wesseling, Hemsterhuis, and Giuseppe Bartoli. Anne Goldgar's work has unmistakably proven that such a network was vital because it was a key forum for the exchange and circulation of ideas and favors.¹³³ On the other hand, however, the publication of Reimarus's Dio

¹³² Carl Mönckeberg, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus und Johann Christian Edelmann* (Hamburg, 1867), 125.

¹³³ See note 8 above.



FIGURE 10 *Portrait of Johann Albert Fabricius (1668–1736). Frontispiece of Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae quae supersunt, vol. 1 (Hamburg, 1750). Engraving by Gustav Andreas Wolfgang [1749].*
COPY IN POSSESSION OF AUTHOR

also marked the end of another journey, namely his “Fabrician tutelage.” Up to that point, with the exception of some smaller pieces, every publication of his had been produced under the supervision of or in direct relationship to Fabricius. These were Reimarus’s edition of Matthaeus Camariotes’s *Orationes II. in Plethonem, de Fato* (1721), for which his father-in-law wrote the preface, and Reimarus’s biographical sketch at the occasion of Fabricius’s death. With the completion of his Dio, Reimarus finally managed to establish himself as a major figure in his own right, and at the age of fifty-eight it was just about time.

How Reimarus Read His Bible

In July 1744, Reimarus sent a long-awaited response to his benefactor Angelo Maria Querini in Rome. Ever since September 1736, the two men had maintained an intensive correspondence. From Reimarus's point of view, Querini's help had been vital for the success of his Cassius Dio edition, which was well under way, but still far from completion.¹ Most importantly, the cardinal provided him with collations from two Dio manuscripts from the Vatican Library² and helped advertise his project to scholarly circles across the Alps.³ Such publicity was essential for the young German scholar, whose meager publication record up to that point had barely made him visible in the larger *Respublica literaria*. But the exchange was not only to Reimarus's advantage. Having been trained by one of the greatest bibliographers of his time, Reimarus was able to provide Querini with all sorts of scholarly materials. Among his main assets was the scholarly legacy of his father-in-law Fabricius and the latter's magnificent library, whose auction catalogue Reimarus was compiling.⁴ This task had put Reimarus at an important intersection in the world of learning and made him an attractive correspondent even to scholarly heavyweights such as Querini. Though Querini was by no means a stranger to scholars throughout Europe,⁵ Reimarus was still able to do his part to publicize the latter's work,

¹ The first volume appeared in 1750. For greater detail on this subject, see chapter 4 above.

² See vqs. Ms. 257, letter Reimarus to Querini, 29 February 1737: "[...] Ipse, Amplissime Cardinalis, petam abs Te audacter et libere, Dionis nimicrum Cassii ut collationem ad Codices Vaticanos institui haud gravitam cures [...]."

³ See vqs. Ms. 257, letter Reimarus to Querini, 10 December 1746: "[...] Quando enim iam ante triennium, ni fallor, Dionis mei non tantum mentionem publice fecisti, sed patronum Te adeo magnum et adiutorem, ne dicam laudatorem, causae praebuisti [...]."

⁴ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Bibliothecae Beati Jo. Alb. Fabricii S. Theol. Doct. P.P. Hamb.* [...], 4 vols. (Hamburg, 1738–41); Reimarus sent Querini the auction catalogue of Fabricius's library so that Querini could select those materials that seemed useful for his work. See vqs. Ms. 257, letter Reimarus to Querini, 11 December 1737: "Nunc mittere quoque ausus sum, cuius tum mentionem injeci, Catalogum Bibliothecae Fabricianaæ, in qua si quid fuerit desideris Tuis aut Amicorum accommodatum, honori ducam, si id a me, ex mandato Tuо, candide curatum iri existimes."

⁵ Giulia Cantarutti, "Angelo Maria Querini e il mondo tedesco. Invito alla ricerca," in *Dalla librerie del vescovo alla biblioteca della città: 250 anni di tradizione della cultura a Brescia*, ed. Ennio Ferraglio and Daniele Montanari (Brescia, 2001), 223–38.

for example, in a review of his *Primordia Corcyrae*⁶ in Friedrich Otto Mencke's prestigious *Nova acta eruditorum*.⁷ Ever since, Querini had again been hard at work on a new project. He was planning a scholarly edition of the works of the sixteenth-century English cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–1558).⁸ In fact, Pole's famous response to Henry VIII, his *Pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione* (1536), more commonly known as *De unitate ecclesiastica*, may have been a source of inspiration for Querini's own irenic leanings and dispositions.⁹ In the spirit of his famous sixteenth-century brother-in-arms, Querini sought out the occasion to engage some Protestant luminaries in a friendly debate of the historical events surrounding the English Reformation and the roles of both Henry VIII and Cardinal Pole. Before submitting the edition to the printer, he sent out portions of the work, notably his *Datriba ad epistolas Reginaldi Poli* to such scholars as Johann Georg Schelhorn (1694–1773) in Memmingen and the above-mentioned Mencke in Leipzig. Most importantly for us, he included Reimarus in the list of recipients.¹⁰ Querini's goal was ultimately to include a Protestant perspective into his proposed edition, possibly with an added

6 Angelo Maria Querini, *Illustrium auctorum dicta expensa et emenda in libro cui titulus Primordia Corcyrae* (Brescia, 1738). Querini was archbishop of Corfu from 1723 to 1727, which may have motivated this project. See Giorgio Fedalto, "Angelo Maria Querini, arcivescovo latino di Corfù (1723–1727)," in *Cultura, religione e politica nell'età di Angelo Maria Querini, Atti del Convegno di studi promosso dal Comune di Brescia in collaborazione con la Fondazione Giorgio Cini di Venezia*, ed. Gino Benzoni and Maurizio Pegrari (Brescia, 1982), 361–67.

7 See letter Reimarus to Querini, 5 November 1738, BBQ, E IV 14, 108v: "Ita vero captus sum lectione Primordiorum Corcyrae, libri profunda veterum Graecorum et Antiquitatum peritia refertissimi, ita exhilaturus lecionibus Dionis multa profutura docentibus, ut utrumque publice pro merito praedicare non intermittam. Dabo enim ipse in Actis Lipsiensibus recensionem Primordionum quantum potero accuratam et diligentem, cum Animadversiones illas ad Euclidem, jussu Tuo, a Mathematico Lipsiensi, per Menckenium Actorum Moderatorem recensendas curaverim, ut ex adjecto Actorum Mense Octobr. perspicias."

8 On Reginald Pole, see Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet* (New York, 2000).

9 Friedrich Lauchert, "Die irenischen Bestrebungen des Cardinals Angelo Maria Querini (O.S.B.) speziell in seinem literarischen Verkehr mit den deutschen protestantischen Gelehrten," *Mitteilungen aus dem Benediktiner—und dem Zisterzensier—Orden* 24 (1903), 243–75; also Giuseppe Alberigo, "Cattolicità e ecumenicità nel Settecento," in *Cultura, religione e politica*, 9–21, as well as Mario Bendiscioli, "La Germania protestante tra ortodossia, pietismo, Aufklärung, nell'età e nella corrispondenza del cardinale Angelo Maria Querini," in *ibid.*, 24–31.

10 Lauchert, "Die irenischen Bestrebungen," 248.

rebuttal by himself. But whereas Querini's letter to Schelhorn had the desired effect and engaged the two men in a passionate, albeit amicable, debate,¹¹ Reimarus's reaction might not have entirely satisfied Querini's expectations. After complementing his benefactor for his "carefully wrought scholarly attentiveness through which [he] had impressively and faithfully to history" uncovered aspects in the works of Pole which past scholarship had thus far "either confused through negligence or falsified through a one-sided investigation," Reimarus refused to engage in the confessional issues at stake:¹²

About the conversion among the English you will not require my judgment, especially if you know that I am so averse to the controversies of the theologians and the disputes among the denominations that I have never engaged in an argument about any fundamental principle of faith, neither in a private conversation, nor in writing.¹³

Reimarus is not being entirely honest here. Secretly, he engaged in what was probably the most comprehensive attack on revelation and Christian doctrine to date, though his refusal to make his opinions known spared him the public outcry, not to mention more serious penal consequences. To Querini, however, such words may have appeared as a note of encouragement to intensify his irenic efforts and end confessional strife among Christian denominations. Had Querini known what Reimarus truly meant, it seems unlikely that he would have continued to support Reimarus's Dio project. Confessional divides notwithstanding, an outright rejection of revelation was ultimately intolerable for both Protestants and Catholics alike.

¹¹ An outcome of this exchange was Johann Georg Schelhorn's *A.M. Card. Quirini... liber singularis De Optimorum Scriptorum Editionibus quae Romae primum prodierunt post typographia inventum, a Germanis opificibus... cum brevibus observationibus... Recensuit annotationes adjecit et diatribam praeliminarem... praemisit J. G. Schelhornius* (Lindau, 1761).

¹² Letter Reimarus to Querini, 27 July 1744, vqs. Ms. 257: "[...] accuratam diligentiam istam miratus sum, qua quae doctissimi adeo viri hac in causa vel per negligentiam confudere runt, vel partium studio corruperunt, distincte et ad fidem historiae, monumentorumque Poli ipsius exposuisti [...]."

¹³ Ibid.: "[...] De conversione ipsa sacrorum apud Anglos non requires judicium meum; praesertim si noris, me ita alienum esse a controversiis Theologorum, et sectarum inter se contentionibus, ut nunquam ne in sermone quidem familiari, nedum scripto, disputacionem de ullo aliquo religionis capite ingredi consueverim."

Reimarus undoubtedly did hold a distaste for confessional disputes and strife.¹⁴ But it was ultimately the thoroughly warranted fear of a violent response that explains his refusal to yield to the pressure of some of his confidants and publish his work.¹⁵ The public was, in his eyes, still immature and unenlightened,¹⁶ they held on to the blind faith of their upbringing,¹⁷ sealed by infant baptism,¹⁸ combined with the prospect of a witch hunt by orthodox theologians,¹⁹ who were denouncing reason and the reasonable worshiper of God from the pulpit.²⁰ Partly from history, partly from his own experience, Reimarus knew of several cases where religious fervor or, to be more precise, the fundamentalism of orthodoxy not only prevented dissenters from expressing their beliefs freely, but put them in great misery or ruined their lives

- ¹⁴ In his *Apologie*, Reimarus writes: "Vielleicht müssen Ketzerey und Streitigkeiten in der Kirche seyn, damit die göttliche Wahrheiten, so wie andere natürliche, nach manchen Verirrungen, Umwegen und Disputen, endlich in ein klares Licht gesetzt werden"; see Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, ed. Gerhard Alexander, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1972), vol. 1, 48.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 56: "Es haben zwar wohl ein Paar vertraute Freunde, mit welchen ich diese Schrift, oder einen Theil davon, in Überlegung genommen hatte, sehr in mich gedrungen, daß ich ihnen erlauben mögte einen Gebrauch zum Nutzen anderer Menschen davon zu machen."
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 41: "Die Schrift mag im Verborgenen, zum Gebrauch verständiger Freunde liegen bleiben; mit meinem Willen soll sie nicht durch den Druck gemein gemacht werden, bevor sich die Zeiten mehr aufklären. Lieber mag der gemeine Hauffe noch eine Weile irren, als daß ich ihn [...] mit Wahrheiten ärgern, und in einen wütenden Religions-Eiffer setzen sollte."
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 41–53: "Ein bloßer Zufall, daß unsre Eltern schon Christen, und zwar dieser Secte, waren, hat uns dazu gebracht [...]. [Diese] schweren Fessel sind uns gleichsam in einem tieffem Schlaf angelegt worden [...]. Die mehrsten gehen in den Fußstapfen ihrer Voreltern so sicher und unbekümmert dahin, als ob sie den Weg zum Himmel nun im Blinden finden würsten."
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 77: "Der kleyne Schreyer wird also auf den Armen dahin getragen, und, wie nun der Gebrauch ist, auf dem Kopf drey mal mit etwas Wasser, im Namen Gottes des Vaters, des Sohns und des heiligen Geistes, begossen. Dann wird er dadurch ein Christ, und nun hat er den Glauben und die Hoffnung zur Seligkeit [...]."
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 56: "[...] am allermeisten aber die Geistlichen [...] sind annoch von so heftigem Religions-Eiffer angeflammt, daß sie Himmel und Hölle bewegen würden, um die vernünftige Religion, als eine allgemeine Feindin aller Secten der Christenheit, unter dem Namen des Unglaubens auszurotten."
- ²⁰ Ibid., 118: "[...] daß die Prediger nicht unterlassen, auch den Erwachsenen die Vernunft als blind und verdorben abzumalen und ihren Gebrauch in geistlichen Dingen verdächtig zu machen."

altogether. Among them was, for example, the seventeenth-century Jewish deist thinker Uriel da Costa (1585–1640),²¹ who eventually opted for suicide rather than a continued life of oppression and public humiliation.²² But there was no need to think back to incidents from previous centuries! During his own time, Reimarus had witnessed the witch hunt against the notorious Bible translator Johann Lorenz Schmidt,²³ that “vexatious mocker of Scripture and the Christian religion,”²⁴ as the eighteenth-century theologian and church historian Johann Georg Walch (1693–1775) had put it. Schmidt’s Wertheim Bible²⁵ was denounced almost unanimously²⁶ by theologians of all different breeds. His odyssey came to a temporary end in Hamburg, where he may have briefly found a refuge as a tutor in the Reimarus household under the pseudonym Johann Ludwig Schroeder.²⁷ Such recent examples of religious persecution and oppression proved to Reimarus that the time was not yet ripe for a more open discussion of his views.

²¹ In his autobiography, entitled *Exemplar humanae vitae* (1640), da Costa describes his tribulations. On the subject, see Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (New York, 2003), 112–14; on da Costa, see Jean Pierre Osier, *D’Uriel da Costa à Spinoza* (Paris, 1983); also Introduction to *Uriel da Costa: Examination of Pharisaic Tradition*, trans. H.P. Salomon and I.S.D. Sassoon (Leiden, 1993), as well as H.P. Salomon, “A Copy of Uriel da Costa’s *Exame das Tradições Phariseas* Located in the Royal Library of Copenhagen,” in *Studia Rosenthalia* 24 (1990), 153–68.

²² Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 134–35: “[Uriel Acosta] ward von seinen vorigen Glaubensgenossen aufs äusserste verfolgt, als ein Mensch der gar keine Religion hätte, weil er weder ein Jude, noch ein Christ, noch Mohametaner wäre. Als er sich endlich aus langem Überdruss der erlittenen Drangsalen wieder zu der Synagoge wandte, ward er auf eine schändliche Weise in der Jüdischen Versammlung nackend gegeisselt, und mit Füssen getreten [...]”

²³ On Schmidt and his “odyssey,” see Paul Spalding, “Im Untergrund der Aufklärung: Johann Lorenz Schmidt auf der Flucht,” in *Europa in der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 4: *Deutsche Aufklärung*, ed. Erich Donnert (Cologne, 1997), 135–54, as well as Paul Spalding, *Seize the Book, Jail the Author: Johann Lorenz Schmidt and Censorship in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (West Lafayette, 1998).

²⁴ Quoted in Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, 2005), 122.

²⁵ *Die göttlichen Schriften vor den Zeiten des Messie Jesus. Der erste Theil, worinnen die Gesetze der Israelen enthalten sind, nach einer freyen Übersetzung, welche durch und durch mit Anmerkungen erläutert und bestätigt wird* (Wertheim, 1735).

²⁶ Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, 124.

²⁷ Almut Spalding and Paul Spalding, “Derrätselhafte Tutor bei Hermann Samuel Reimarus. Begegnungen zweier radikaler Aufklärer in Hamburg,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hamburgische Geschichte* 87 (2001), 49–64.

Nonetheless, personal doubt about Christian doctrine had led him to a thorough investigation of the pillars of faith and to look for their grounding in Scripture.²⁸

Reimarus's findings were a disaster for Christian doctrine as well as revelation in general. According to Reimarus, Christian dogma is based on premises that could not withstand the test of a rational investigation, and Christian theologians and ministers are making every possible effort to preach a blind faith and denounce the use of reason in matters of faith from the pulpit.²⁹ In this respect, they ultimately contradict the teachings of Christ, who, according to Reimarus, preached only the practical principles of a rational faith.³⁰ But most theologians are philosophically and philologically too unskilled to be able to examine Scripture in its original languages on grounds of reason alone.³¹ If they were capable of doing so, then they would have quickly realized that Scripture provided no justification for the Trinity, the messiahship of Jesus, or his second coming, and they would have had to acknowledge problems such as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, as well as numerous chronological inconsistencies.³² Their ignorance notwithstanding, Catholic and Protestant

²⁸ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 52–53: “Unterdessen fiel doch die Gelegenheit daran zu denken gar oft vor, und die Zweifel, welche ich vorhin gehabt hatte, kamen nicht allein mit neuer Stärke, sondern mehrten sich und häuften sich auch, ohne mein Suchen, und zu meiner größten Beunruhigung [...]. Ich musste doch einmal zuverlässig wissen, woran ich wäre, damit ich mein Leben nicht stets in einer schwankenden Ungewißheit zubringen [...] dürfte [...]. Das brachte mich endlich zu der vesten Entschließung, meine Religion, die mir vor dem Gebrauch der Vernunft war eingepflanzt worden, reiflich und mit einer gleichgültigen Wahrheits-Liebe zu untersuchen, das Endurtheil mögte auch ausfallen wie es wollte [...]. Kein Mensch muß seine Meynung auf bloße Vorurtheile gründen [...].”

²⁹ Ibid., 96–97: “Aber, das ist auch in der That der Vorsatz der Herrn Prediger nicht, daß sie die Erwachsenen numehr von der Kanzel zu einer vernünftigen Religion, und zur vernünftigen Einsicht der Wahrheit des Christenthums, unterrichten wollten. Sondern man schreckt vielmehr diejenigen, welche nun Lust bekommen mögten nachzudenken und auf den Grund ihres bisherigen blinden Glaubens zu forschen, von dem Gebrauch ihrer edelsten Natur-Gabe, der Vernunft, ab.”

³⁰ Ibid., 99: “Das Beispiel ihres großen Lehrers Jesu ist darin nicht auf ihrer Seite. Denn der hat nichts als eine vernünftige praktische Religion gepredigt.”

³¹ Ibid., 149: “[...] wie viele wohl unter den Theologis selbst sind, die des Hebräischen und Griechischen so mächtig geworden, daß sie ihr Glaubens-System nicht auf Übersetzungen, Ausleger, und eingeführte Compendia, sondern bloß auf eigene Einsicht der Grundsprachen, und der in der ganzen Bibel zerstreuten Heils-Ordnung, gründeten?”

³² Ibid., 149–50: “Was antworten sie sich auf die Frage: wie der Haupt-Grund von der Dreyeinigkeit, Drey sind die da zeugen im Himmel, in unsre Bibeln hinein kommen sey, da ausgemacht ist, daß er in keinem alten griechischen Codice des Neuen Testaments

theologians alike were skilled enough to utilize the superstitious beliefs of the common folk and so they kept preaching about the power and works of Satan and witches.³³ According to Reimarus, however, most of such perversions of what was originally a purer form of Christianity can be traced back to ancient times, where iconolatry was a fairly common occurrence.³⁴ Reimarus arrived at such conclusions from his thorough and detailed examination of the individual books of the Bible—this constitutes the bulk of his radical work.

The *Apologie* can be divided into two parts. The first part assumes the form of a critical commentary of the books of the Old Testament from the times of the patriarchs, to which are added segments on the concept of God, the doctrine of the Messiah, the nature of man, and the immortality of the soul. The second part of the work focuses on the New Testament. It sets out with a description of Judaism at the time of Christ, continues with an in-depth analysis of the life of Jesus as recorded in the gospels, followed by an evaluation of the apostolic system after the death of Jesus, and it concludes with a segment on the canon of the books of the New Testament.

At the outset of his analysis, Reimarus predetermines a set of general standards according to which revelation should be judged. These include the reliability and impeccable behavior of the supposed divine agents of revelation. If the conduct of biblical figures does not correspond to the highest moral standards, then they need to be considered unfit as divinely ordained messengers.³⁵

stehe? [...] Wo bleibt die Wiederkunft Jesu aus den Wolken des Himmels, welche er versprach [...]? [...] Sind ihnen die Schwierigkeiten recht bekannt [...], daß Moses nicht wohl von den fünf ersten Büchern [...] der Verfasser seyn könne [...]?”

- 33 Ibid., 152: “[...] ja daß sich die Herrn Theologi nachgerade schämen, viel von des Teufels Macht und Wirkungen zu sprechen; so wollen doch diese ungern daran, zu gestehen, daß alles Wahn oder Betrug sey: und dadurch unterhalten sie des Pöbels Aberglauben [...]” On the subject of the “death of the devil,” see Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (New York, 2001), 375–405; somewhat related, on the subject of the “enchantment” and “disenchantment” of the world, see Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1999), as well as Keith Thomas’s classic *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971). For a case study about the persistence of demonology during the Enlightenment, see Erik Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment: Johann Joseph Gassner and the Demons of Eighteenth-Century Germany* (New Haven, 2005), as well as Lyndal Roper’s brilliant study *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, 2004), 222–46.
- 34 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 151–52: “Das zweyte Übel, welches die Christenheit entehrt, ist der Aberglaube, eine alte noch aus dem Heydenthum und Judenthum stammende Krankheit des Christenthums.”
- 35 Ibid., 184–85: “[...] wenn es Gott gefallen hätte eine übernatürliche und seligmachende Offenbarung durch gewisse Mittelspersonen oder göttliche Boten an das menschliche

Further, miracles cannot be taken into serious consideration because they could easily have been added *post factum* by a skilled editor.³⁶ If, however, a miraculous account contains so many details that ultimately cast doubt on the veracity of a particular occurrence, then the entire event needs to be discarded and judged as untrue.³⁷

Perhaps needless to say is that almost none of the biblical characters and recorded events pass Reimarus's rigorous test. He discards the allegorical interpretation of Gen. 3:14–15,³⁸ in which theologians discovered the promise of a messiah, just as much as he rejects Abel's sacrifice as a reference to Christ's atoning death on the cross.³⁹ The biblical account of Noah and the flood do not measure up to Reimarus's standard on numerous levels. First of all, Reimarus points out, no acceptable reason is given why all of humankind was doomed, aside from the fact that "the children of God were looking at the daughters of men and saw how beautiful they were and so they took those whom they chose as their wives."⁴⁰ But starting with the mass of water necessary to cover the

Geschlecht zu bringen: so würde er solche dazu ausersehen, welche selbst den Endzweck hätten die ihnen offenbarte Religion allen Menschen so viel möglich kund zu machen und unter ihnen zu befördern [...]. Wir erwarten also billig von Boten einer göttlichen Offenbarung, daß sie die göttlichen Absichten zu ihren eigenen machen, und derselben gemäß reden, lehren, gebieten und handeln [...]. Woferne aber Personen sind [...] deren Handlungen bloß auf zeitliche Dinge gerichtet sind; oder die wohl gar [...] dem wahren Erkenntniß Gottes [...] hinderlich und anstössig werden; so ist klar, daß sie den Zweck eine seligmachende Religion zu offenbaren nicht haben [...]."

36 Ibid., 188–89: "Denn es kostet einem Schreiber nicht mehr Mühe, so viele und so große Wunder zu machen wie er will [...]. In Factis gilt kein Zeugniß als derer die zur selben Zeit gelebt [...] haben. Nachher kann die Erzählung von den Begebenheiten vielleicht erst mit dem Wunderbaren ausgeschmückt seyn [...]."

37 Ibid., 191: "Und wenn in einer vorgegebenen göttlichen Schrift nur ein Paar erzählte Wunder, aus dem offensuren Widerspruch, erweislich unwahr und unmöglich sind: so ist die gantze Karte falsch, und man braucht sich an alle die übrigen nicht zu kehren."

38 Gen. 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel"; Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, p. 194: "So sollte dann Schlange und Weib, Schlangen Saame und Weibes Saame, einer durch den andern, beschädiget und gestraft werden. Ums Himmels willen! wie ist doch darin der Messias zu finden?"

39 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 197–200.

40 Ibid., 206: "Worin bestand denn doch die abscheuliche Boßheit, der Frevel und das allgemeine Verderben des menschlichen Geschlechts [...]? Wir finden nicht das geringste angezeigt, was diesen Namen verdiente. Bloß dieses wird gesagt: Die Kinder Gottes sahen nach den Töchtern der Menschen wie sie schön wären und nahmen ihnen Weiber aus allen die sie erwählten. War es denn eine Sünde daß sie Weiber nahmen?"

entire surface of the planet to the proportions between the ark's size and its life cargo, and the problems associated with sustaining both animals and human beings over the entire period.⁴¹ Reimarus in utter disbelief exclaims, "Oh, dear gentlemen, please stop torturing your faith with such kinds of miracles, which contain as many discrepancies as there are animals in your ark."⁴² Not much better fare Abraham and Moses in Reimarus's devastating assessment. The former is a model of immorality and deceit.⁴³ Apart from having married his half-sister Sarah,⁴⁴ Abraham is completely under the thumb of his wife because he gives in to her jealous request and banishes both the Egyptian servant Hagar and her son Ishmael, whom Abraham had actually fathered with her.⁴⁵ At the same time, however, he is shrewd and ruthless enough to hand his wife over to such foreign kings as the Egyptian pharaoh and Abimelech, under the pretense that she was his sister, in return for material profit,⁴⁶ not to mention the most obvious evidence for his religious fanaticism, namely his readiness to murder his own son.⁴⁷ For Reimarus, this is more than enough proof that the God of Abraham is a cruel and degenerate being who finds joy in the blood of innocents. How could such cruelty, Reimarus asks, be interpreted as a type of Christ or provide evidence for the promise of a messiah?⁴⁸

⁴¹ Ibid., 205–10.

⁴² Ibid., 210: "Ach, liebe Herrn, höret doch einmal auf, euren und unsren Glauben mit solchen Wundern zu martern, worin so viele Widersprüche sind, als ihr Thiere in eurem Kasten habt!"

⁴³ Ibid., 230: "[Abraham und Sarah] haben von beiden Seiten alles gethan, was Betrug und niederträchtige Schandthaten zur Erfüllung falscher Absichten beytragen können."

⁴⁴ Ibid., 227: "Die Sarah, sein Weib, war eine leibliche Tochter von seinem Vater, aber nicht von seiner Mutter; folglich doch seine Halbschwester [...]. Er lebte demnach in einer Ehe, die hernach in Moses Gesetze ausdrücklich verboten war."

⁴⁵ Ibid., 237: "Wie ist aber das zu entschuldigen, daß Abraham seine Nebenfrau, als sie schon schwanger war, noch als eine Sklavin von der Sarah züchtigen ließ, und darnach, ohne Betrachtung ihres Zustandes und des Kindes, das sie von ihm trug, lauffen ließ? noch mehr aber daß er sie zuletzt mit ihrem Knaben gäntzlich wegjagte, sie zu Fuß ub die öde Wüste schickte, und ihr weiter nichts als eine Flasche mit Wasser, und so viel Brod als sie tragen konnte, zu allem Erbtheile mit auf den Weg gab?"

⁴⁶ Ibid., 230–32: "Abraham giebt seine Ehefrau für seine Schwester aus [...]. Und warum nimmt Abraham wehrend der Zeit, daß er seine Frau ausgeliehen hat, so viele Geschenke an? Denn er wuste ja, daß das ihretwegen geschah."

⁴⁷ Ibid., 238: "Was soll man aber vollend dazu sagen, daß Abraham sich von seiner vermeynten göttlichen Eingebung so weit treiben läst, daß er seinen andern geliebten Sohn von der Sarah Gott zum Opfer schlachten will? Das ist ja in dem Carakter eines unsinnigen Fanatici [...]."

⁴⁸ Ibid., 239–40: "Wer kann die Garstigkeit solcher That mit einem göttlichen Befehl zusammen reimen? Ich halte es aber in einer andern Betrachtung noch scheußlicher, daß ein

By far the most extensive segments in the first part of the *Apologie* are Reimarus's observations about Moses. In the spirit of the *Traité des trois imposteurs*,⁴⁹ he presents Moses as an impostor, trained in the tricks and crafts of Egyptian priesthood, who used his skills to gain political influence over a brutish and superstitious people.⁵⁰ Miracles were then either part of Moses' arsenal of tricks,⁵¹ natural occurrences, such as the manna in the desert,⁵² or

Mensch in der Hinrichtung seines eigenen Kindes einen Gottesdienst sucht [...]. Das heist auch Gott entehren, und ihn zu einem ungerechten fürchterlichen Wesen machen, das sich an der Vergiessung unschuldigen Bluts vergnügte [...]. Wo aber haben die Herren einen Grund gefunden, daß diese Geschichte ein Vorbild Christum seyn soll?" For more recent arguments along the same lines, see Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York, 2008), 268–283, as well as Christopher Hitchens, *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York, 2007), 97–108.

- 49 See Abraham Anderson, ed., *The Treatise of the Three Impostors and the Problem of Enlightenment: A New Translation of the 'Traité des trois imposteurs'* (1777 edition) (New York, 1997); Winfried Schröder, *Ursprünge des Atheismus: Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik- und Religionskritik des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1998), 452–64; Richard Popkin et al., eds., *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Free Thought in Early-Eighteenth-Century Europe: Studies on the 'Traité des trois imposteurs'* (Boston, 1996). For a recent treatment of the subject, see Georges Minois, *The Atheist's Bible: The Most Dangerous Book that Never Existed*, ed. and trans. Lys Ann Weiss (Chicago, 2012).
- 50 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 273–74: "Wenigstens sieht man aus der folgenden Beschreibung seiner Handlungen, daß [Moses] mit dem Feuer und den Metallen sehr wohl umzugehen gewust habe. Die Egypter sind auch jeder Zeit wegen ihrer Magie, oder Zauberkunst, berufen gewesen, weil sie vermöge der Naturwissenschaft Wunderdinge ausrichten konnten; oder auch zuweilen durch Gaukeleyen sich das Ansehen gaben, als ob sie dergleichen wirklich ausrichteten. Daher finden wir in dieser Geschichte, daß sie (dem Ansehen nach) ihre Stäbe in Schlangen, Wasser in Blut verwendeln, und Frösche hervorbringen konnten. Der unwissende Hauffe hielte dergleichen Blendwerk für übernatürliche Wirkungen, Magie oder Zauberey [...]. Er wuste also diese Kunststücke zu machen, ehe er eine göttliche Sendung vorgab, und ehe er diese göttliche Sendung dem Volke und dem Könige durch solche Kunststücke, als durch Wunder die ihm Gott jetzt erst verliehen hätte, zu beweisen suchte."
- 51 Ibid., 281–82: "Ist es nicht auch verdächtig, daß Gott solche Wunder wehlen sollte, welche Moses längst durch Gaukeleyen vorzuspiegeln gelernt hatte, und welche die Egyptischen Weisen und Zauberer sogleich nachmachen konnten? Kurtz: zu der ganzen Handlung, an sich, brauchte Moses Gott nicht vom Himmel kommen zu lassen; er konnte sie allein und natürlicher Weise verrichten, und würde sie auch ohne übernatürliche Erscheinung und Wunderkraft verrichtet haben."
- 52 Ibid., 340–41: "Eben auf die Weise, wie unser Geschichtschreiber den natürlichen Zufall mit den Wachteln durch widersprechende Errichtungen und Vergrößerungen zum Wunder zu machen sucht, so verfährt er auch mit dem Manna. Wenn er hätte aufrichtig seyn wollen: so müste er ja seinen Israeliten und der Nachwelt nicht verhören haben, daß das Manna an sich eine natürliche Sache sey, die gerade um diese Zeit, in eben der

simply inventions of the author, as was the case with the ten plagues⁵³ or the crossing of the Red Sea.⁵⁴

Not much more lenient is Reimarus's judgment of Israelite kingship under both David and Solomon. According to Reimarus, David's success is based somewhat on his good relations with the priesthood, who had chosen him from the beginning to get rid of the unpredictable Saul,⁵⁵ and partly on his self-serving choice of alliances⁵⁶ and his ruthless character, which never made him flinch from any form of cruelty and whose magnitudes not even his solemn prayers and poems could minimize.⁵⁷ Given such extraordinary brutality and ruthlessness, Solomon receives a slightly better evaluation from Reimarus than does his father. Undoubtedly, Solomon was a wise man and much less of a warmonger than David.⁵⁸ These traits, however, do not make him a model of wise and benevolent rulership. He had a tendency to flaunt his wealth with

Wüste Sinai, so wie anderwerts an vielen Orten gefunden werde, und denen daselbst Wohnenden oder Reisenden zur Nahrung diene oder wenigstens zu Hülffe komme."

53 Ibid., 288: "Gemach! Der Geschichtschreiber erquickt uns wieder, und giebt und durch seine eigenen Widersprüche die Unmöglichkeit seiner Erzählung zu erkennen."

54 Ibid., 299–326.

55 Ibid., 569–70: "Das war aber der Mann nach dem Hertzen und Willen Gottes, nämlich der Priester- und Propheten-Schaar, die ihren Willen für Gottes Willen ausgab, und nun durch David ihr Mühtlein an dem Hause Sauls gekühlt hatte [...]. Samuel [hatte] diesen David zu dem Werkzeuge ausersehen gehabt Saul vom Trohn zu stürtzen [...]; and ibid., 589: "David wuste nämlich gar wohl, daß Saul bloß durch die Propheten und Priester zum Könige gemacht, und durch eben dieselbe wieder gestürtzt wäre [...]. Daher war die Grundregel seiner gantzen Regierung, dem Priester-Orden so viel als möglich zu willfährten. Dabey war er schon durch viele Proben versichert, wenn ers nur mit dem hielte, und für ihre Vorteile sorgte, so könnte er getrost rauben, plündern, morden [...]."

56 Ibid., 573: "[...] und [David] wendet sich mit ihnen erstlich zu dem Könige der Ammoniter, einem alten Feinde der Israeliten [...]."

57 Ibid., 612: "[...] die Unmenschlichkeit und Boßheit, die Mordthaten, Tücke und Meyneyde, gereichen dem David nun nicht zur Sünde. Aber last uns die [...] Handlungen an sich nackt und bloß, nach den Regeln der Vernunft [...] betrachten: so kommt der heßlichste Carakter zum Vorschein [...]. Ja lasset David selbst noch so viel beten und geistliche Lieder tichten: und sehet ihn hernach, wie er alle Nachkommen der vorigen königlichen Familie, ohne geringste Verschuldung, aufhenken lässt, wie er mit Menschen umgeht, und die Überwundenen, mit Weibern und Kindern niedermachen, oder zersägen, zerdrücken und lebendig verbrennen lässt: werdet ihr ihn noch nach seinen Psalmen beurtheilen, und für einen Heiligen halten?" On a more recent treatment of David along similar lines, see Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2001), 73–103.

58 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 624: "Wir wollen [Salomon] gern eine Weißheit zu regieren einräumen; die scheint er besser verstanden zu haben als sein Vater David [...]. Er war auch

daunting building projects and opulent gardens,⁵⁹ and he surpassed his father by far in his womanizing.⁶⁰ If it was true, Reimarus points out, that Solomon's harem numbered around one thousand women, and

if he had spent only a total of fourteen days with each one of them, or if he at times had taken a mistress, or at times returned to one of his former loves, would he then not have wasted all of his life with such alternating lusts? And how could in fact the strongest human nature be a match for so many women and mistresses, and how could one survive this for about forty years?⁶¹

Such qualities are hardly what Reimarus must have been looking for in a reliable agent of divine revelation, especially since Solomon seems not to have had a particularly high regard for the religion of Moses, at times making sacrifices to the pagan deities of his many wives.⁶²

But if none of the biblical figures measured up to Reimarus's standards of a divine revelation,⁶³ the God of the Old Testament seemed to be doing so

seinem Vater darin weit vorzuziehen, daß er nicht kriegerisch und grausam war, sondern Friede und Freundschaft mit allen Nachbarn unterhielte [...].”

59 Ibid., 625–26: “Er bauete einen treflichen Pallast, welcher an Größe und Herrlichkeit den Tempel selbst übertroffen haben mag [...]. Dabey fehlte es nicht an schönen Lustgärten, Teichen, Wasserleitungen und Spatziergängen, ja einem grossen Waffenhouse.”

60 Ibid., 625: “Nichts aber konnte weiter getrieben seyn als sein Serrail, darin er 700 Weiber und 300 Keksweiber, also Tausend in allen, ein gantzes Regiment von Schönen, zu seiner Wollust gehalten haben soll. Das ist mehr, als wir von irgend einem Sultan oder weibischen Sardanapalus lesen [...].”

61 Ibid., 626: “Wenn er denn sich mit jeder nur auf 14 Tage lang belustiget hätte, oder auch zuweilen seine Keksweiber besucht, oder sich wieder zu seinen alten amours gewendet hätte: würde er denn nicht seine gantze Lebenszeit mit solcher abwechselnden Wollust verschwendet haben? Und wie könnte die stärkste Natur eines Menschen so viele Weibern und Keksweibern gewachsen seyn, und solches 40 Jahre lang aushalten?”

62 Ibid., 627–30: “Hergegen sind in der Geschichte von Salomo [...] viele Beweise vorhanden, daß er von der gantzen Mosaischen Religion nichts gehalten hat [...]. Er nahm ausser der Egyptischen Gemahlin, auch Moabitische, Ammonitische, Edomitische, Zidonische und Hethitische Weiber [...]. Wenn wir auch seine Gesinnung so erklären, daß ers für gleichgültig gehalten, ob man Gott unter diesem oder jenem Namen, mit diesen oder andern Cerimonien verehrte: so würde doch eine weibliche Gottheit, und ein Molochdienst mit Verbrennung lebendiger Kinder, alle vernünftige Religion und alle Menschlichkeit aufheben; und dergleichen Aberglauben ist von einem Weisen Könige nicht zu gedenken.”

63 Ibid., 673: “Nach diesem Plan und Maafstäbe haben wir nun bisher die gantze Reihe der Israelitischen Ertzväter und heilig gehaltene Männer, vom Noah an bis auf den Josias,

even less. In his eyes, ancient Judaism was heavily ceremonial and not much different from pagan rituals and cults. In fact, the term אלהים [God], which is plural, clearly betrays traces of polytheism, which would indicate that the religion of biblical Judaism was still very close to ancient paganism.⁶⁴ According to Reimarus, the God of Israel is far from the benevolent, omniscient, and supreme being that a rational religion would require. In fact, he is a deity with many human qualities, who often reverses or regrets his actions,⁶⁵ communicates with human beings through a cloud, cowers in a burning bush, and consumes sacrifices, at times with the priest who performs them.⁶⁶

Having established the unsuitability of the Old Testament as a source of divine revelation, Reimarus moves on to exercise his critical skills on the main pillar of Christianity, the New Testament. But his conclusions are hardly more positive. According to Reimarus, Jesus appeared on the scene at a time when Judaism consisted of numerous, often competing sects, and expectations peaked of a worldly messiah who would provide relief from the Roman yoke.⁶⁷ Such an atmosphere was obviously fertile soil for all kinds of charlatans and

gantz ohne Vorurtheil beleuchtet. Wir sind versichert, wenn eben dieselben Handlungen, unter andern Namen, in einer andern Geschichte aufgeführt wären: daß ein jeder Mensch, der nur einigen Verstand und Ehrbarkeit besitzet, sie für Unsinn, Gewinnsucht, Betrug, schändlich Gewerbe, Unzucht, Schinderey, Straßenraub, Grausamkeit, Diebstahl, Empörung, Meuterey, heuchlerische Tücke und abscheuliche Boßheiten erklären würde."

- 64 Ibid., 695: "Ich werde der Wahrheit nicht zu nahe treten, wenn ich sage, daß sie noch sehr nach der alten heydniſchen Theologie schmecken, welche mit vielen Irrthümern, zumal nach der Vorstellung des Volks, verunreinigt war. Gleich bey der Geschichte der Schöpfung wird von Gott dem Schöpfer in der Vielheits-Zahl gesprochen: *die Götter, Elohim*, schuf Himmel und Erde; als ob ein Concilium Deorum, eine Götter-Schaar, verstehten sollte, welche bey dem Werke der Schöpfung geschäftig gewesen." On the subject of biblical monotheism, see Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York and Oxford, 2001), esp. 135–78.
- 65 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 698: "Nach einiger Zeit gereuet es ihn, daß er Menschen geschaffen hat, weil sie zu Weibern nahmen welche sie wollten. Er nimmt sich also vor, alle Menschen, bis auf acht Seelen nach, nebst allen Land-Thieren, durch eine allgemeine Wasserfluth zu vertilgen."
- 66 Ibid., 701: "Bald sitzt er auch in einem Dornbusch, als ein Feuer das brennet und nichts verbrennet: dann wieder in dem feurigen Schmauch, welcher den reisenden Israeliten zum Zeichen diente. Daraus läst er zuweilen blitzende Strahlen schiessen, und verzehrt nicht allein das Opfer des Altars, sondern auch die Priester dazu."
- 67 See Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 17: "Je verworren er es nun zu den Zeiten Jesu schon aus sahe, je lebhafter wurde die Erwartung des verheissen Messias [...]. Diese Hoffnung hatten die Propheten erregt [...]. Die Vorstellung, welche sie davon geben, verknüpft beides die Herstellung eines vollkommenen geist-und weltlichen Zustandes."

impostors.⁶⁸ Jesus' teachings and his actions needed to be evaluated within the context of his time, and they needed to be separated from those of his disciples.⁶⁹

Unlike their teacher, the apostles abandoned Jewish law and custom⁷⁰ and introduced the completely new doctrine of a spiritual, suffering redeemer⁷¹ after the death of Jesus deprived them of their hopes of becoming the twelve chosen leaders of the tribes of Israel.⁷² Jesus and the Jews of his time used the terms מֶלֶכְוֹת הַשָּׁמֶן [kingdom of heaven] and מֶלֶכְוֹת אֱלֹהִים [kingdom of God] to refer to a worldly kingdom of Israel, brought about by God's intervention on behalf of his people.⁷³ Although God remained the ultimate head of this ancient theocracy, the Messiah was his anointed representative on earth.⁷⁴ Jesus skillfully quoted Bible passages that were commonly viewed as references

68 Ibid., 19: "Es war also bey der allgemeinen und falschen Erwartung eines weltlichen Reichs, das der Messias aufrichten würde, kein Wunder, daß sich auch Betrüger den Wahn der Leute zu Nutze machen wollten, und das arme Volk mit Gaukeleyen bethörten, als wäre ein jeder der verheissene Messias [...]."

69 Ibid., 20: "Allein, ehe wir zu dieser Betrachtung schreiten, muß ich die Ursache sagen, theils, warum man die Lehre der Apostel von der eigenen Lehre Jesu abszusondern hat, theils warum man selbst in der Lehre Jesu dasjenige, was für alle und jede Menschen und Nationen gesagt war, mit dem was besonders der Juden ihre eingeführte Meynung und Gebräuche betraf, nicht vermengen müsse."

70 Ibid., 23: "Die Apostel haben hingegen das gantze Levitische Gesetz abgeschafft, und für unnütz erklärt."

71 Ibid., 22: "Es wird bald erhellten, daß die Apostel ihr gantzes System, welches sie bey Jesu Leben hatten, nach seinen Tode geändert haben; und nun erst angefangen, ihn für einen geistlichen leydenden Erlöser der Menschen von ihren Sünden anzupreisen [...]."

72 Ibid., 136–37: "Jesus hatte [seinen Jüngern] selbst gesagt, er wolle sie zu Menschen-Fischern machen, ihnen sey das Reich beschieden, sie sollen sitzen auf zwölf Stühlen und richten die zwölf Geschlechte Israels. Wie aber aus diesen vornehmen Gedanken nichts ward, und ihr vermeynter König gekreuzigtet war: so klagten sie gantz niedergeschlagen über den wiedrigen Ausgang ihrer Hofnung [...]."

73 Ibid., 41: "Was bedeutet nun *das Himmelreich* bey den Juden? *Malcuth Haschamajim* und *Malcuth Elohim*, *Himmelreich*, und *Reich Gottes*, bedeutet bey den Juden, so wie auch in Jesu Munde, einerley: nämlich das Reich, welches Gott unter den Juden durch den verheissen Messias, oder Christ des Herrn, aufrichten würde."

74 Ibid., 122–23: "Weil sie sich aber vorstelleten, daß Gott seine Theocratie in Israel noch viel herrlicher unter dem verheissen Messias offenbaren würde: so hieß das Himmelreich, besonders und ausnehmend, das Reich, welches Gott in seinem Volke unter dem Messias würde aufrichten [...] Weil denn Gott diesen Gesalbten zum König einsetzen würde, und selbst der höchste König darin sey: so hieß dies Himmelreich auch das Reich Gottes [...]. Denn in der That wird Himmel bey den Juden für Gott, der im Himmel wohnt, gesetzt."

to a future messiah so that he could bolster his claims to this title.⁷⁵ Reimarus also points out that the extremely figurative nature of the Hebrew language at the time of Jesus is partly responsible for tendencies to read a spiritual savior into various passages. Generally, such passages and phrases mean much less than their ostentatious language suggests.⁷⁶ Yet such misinterpretation is also at the root of Christian concepts such as the Holy Spirit or the Trinity.⁷⁷ This holds true, too, for the Last Supper, which, according to Reimarus, was a Jewish practice that Jesus only reinterpreted as a commemoration of his death.⁷⁸

The dichotomy between the goals of Jesus and the role of the apostles in distorting them after the death of their teacher led Reimarus to a closer examination of the actions of Jesus and of his disciples. According to Reimarus, Jesus was in league with his cousin John the Baptist,⁷⁹ who feigned a heavenly vision to publicize the former's messianic claims.⁸⁰ This, however, alarmed Jewish authorities, who were worried about repercussions from the Romans, and so they tried to intervene beforehand, which in turn forced Jesus to repeatedly

75 Ibid., 60: “[Es] ist offenbar, daß Jesus sich für den verheissen Messias hat wollen gehalten wissen. Daher folgte, daß er sich alle die Vorzüge zueignen muste, welche die Juden damaliger Zeit in dem erwarteten Messia suchten. Und es stimmt damit überein, daß er sich alle die Schriftörter zu Nutze gemacht, welche die Juden seiner Zeit von dem Messias zu erklären gewohnt waren, sie mogten eigentlich auf ihn gehen oder nicht.”

76 Ibid., 61: “Ihre figürliche Redensarten bedeuten allemal weniger als sie zu bedeuten scheinen. Man muß sie also erst von ihrem Pracht entkleyden, wenn man die bloße Wahrheit ihres Verstandes einsehen will.”

77 Ibid., 73: “Wir kommen nun zu den Stellen, welche einen *heiligen Geist* erwehnen, ob darin etwa mehr Geheimnisse liegen als in der Benennung eines Sohns Gottes. Überhaupt spielen die Hebräer sehr mit dem Wort Geist.”

78 Ibid., 109: “Jesus wollte nichts wesentliches von der verordneten Oster-Maalzeit abschaffen oder ändern, sondern nur ein willkürliches Erinnerungs-Zeichen seines Leydens damit verknüpft wissen, daß die Jünger seines Todes eingedenk wären so oft sie künftig Ostern feyren würden.”

79 Ibid., 148: “Und sodann machten sie sich einander vor dem Volke groß. Jesus fing an zu predigen und Wunder zu thun: er nahm Jünger an, davon ihm Johannes die ersten zuwiese, und setzte die Tauffe Johannis durch dieselben, so wie die Verkündigung des nahen Himmelreichs, fort.”

80 Ibid., 148: “Denn er muste den ersten Auftritt in solcher Person mit einer verabredeten Vorspiegelung zwischen Johanne und ihm selbst machen, als ob Johannes, da er Jesum zuvor nicht gekannt, bey seiner Tauffe, durch eine Bath Kol, eine Stimme vom Himmel, die Offenbarung zuerst bekommen hätte, dieser sey der bey dem Jesaia verkündigte Auserwehlte Gottes.”

relocate to evade prosecution.⁸¹ Since Jesus put much effort into avoiding his capture, Reimarus points out, “he never had the intention to suffer and to die, but rather tried very hard not to be killed.”⁸² From a legal point of view, the responsibility for the crucifixion fell undoubtedly to the Romans—not to the Jews, as the authors of the gospels want us to believe. The Jews were not allowed to execute criminals and had to hand him over to the occupational force. According to Reimarus, it must have been a willful distortion by the Evangelists, who claim that Pilate did not find any fault with him.⁸³ Disillusioned by the death of their teacher and their hopes of leadership roles in his worldly kingdom shattered, the apostles invented a completely new system with a suffering redeemer at its core, one who would rise from the dead, ascend to heaven, and return again on judgment day.⁸⁴ This is why Reimarus devotes significant space to his investigation of the resurrection. In his analysis, he castigates the witness accounts about the resurrection and sightings of Christ thereafter as unreliable and biased. If, in fact, the resurrection had occurred, then no testimony would have been more convincing than that by the Roman guards, who were generally highly critical of Jewish superstition.⁸⁵ Most likely, the disciples stole the body in order to spread the rumor of Jesus’

81 Ibid., 153: “Denn die Juden musten allerdings besorgt seyn, sobald sich jemand für den Messias, oder König der Juden, ausgabe, so würden die Römer kommen, und ihnen Land und Leute wegnehmen.”

82 Ibid., 150: “Wir übergehen andere kleine Gelegenheiten, da Jesus den Gewaltthätigkeiten der Juden gerne entwich, und nicht zeigte daß es seine Absicht sey zu leyden und zu sterben, sondern vielmehr seinem Tode so viel möglich zu entgehen.”

83 Ibid., 167–68: “Aber, wenn man die Wahrheit sagen soll, so ist doch nicht glaublich, daß Pilatus Jesum so gantz unschuldig, und wie es heist gerecht gefunden hätte [...]. Denn wenn er auch das Unternehmen mehr für lächerlich und Mitleydswürdig gehalten: so war es doch wieder die Majestät des Kaysers [...]”

84 Ibid., 180–81: “Das vorige System der Apostel, Jesus sey zur zeitlichen Erlösung des Volks Israel, und zur Aufrichtung einer neuen Theokratie gesandt, war in der That das wahre System ihres Meisters. Da es aber übel ausfiel: so ist das neue System der Apostel aus Noth, wegen ihrer fehlgeschlagenen Hoffnung, von ihnen ertichtet worden. Es bestand darin, daß Jesus eben dazu gekommen sey, daß er leyden und sterben sollte, um die Sünde der ganzen Welt zu büßen; er sey aber nach vollbrachtem Versühnungs-Amte vom Tode wieder lebendig auferstanden, und nach 40 Tagen gen Himmel gefahren, von wannen er bald in den Wolken kommen werde, Gericht zu halten und dann sein herrlich Reich anzufangen.”

85 Ibid., 189–90: “[...] die Wache bestand ja aus einer Menge Römischer, d.i. heydnischer Soldaten, welche gewiß unparteyisch, und vielmehr gegen die Auferstehung überhaupt, als ein Stück des Jüdischen Aberglaubens, stark eingenommen waren.”

resurrection.⁸⁶ Since, according to Reimarus, only Matthew mentions guards, it seems likely that he invented them so as to counter allegations about the stealing of the body that had already been raised in Jewish circles.⁸⁷ Reimarus, however, also finds fault with what he calls the second pillar of Christianity, the return of Christ on judgment day. The apostles were able to draw on a second, though less popular, concept in Judaism, namely of a humiliated messianic figure who would eventually return and establish a Jewish kingdom over the entire world.⁸⁸ Although with his return the current political structure would end, the new order would also be a worldly kingship, not a spiritual one, as Christian theologians would like us to believe.⁸⁹ However, once the hopes for the projected imminent kingdom were shattered, Christians—starting with Peter—adopted the idea of a second coming at the end of times.⁹⁰

Reimarus then discusses the success of this new belief system. Accordingly, it found a significant following in the pagan world because its adherents did not have to commit to Jewish ceremonial law.⁹¹ The enthusiasm of the apostles,⁹²

86 Ibid., 199: "Also war es [...] gar wohl möglich, daß die Jünger Jesu [...] den Körper des Nachts aus dem Grabe gestohlen, und anderwerts hingebracht hätten, wie ihnen die Juden schuld gaben [...]. Ich sage aber, die Beschuldigung hatte nicht allein eine Möglichkeit sondern auch große Wahrscheinlichkeit vor sich [...]."

87 Ibid., 193: "Da aber kein einziger Apostel ausser Matthäo, bey solchen dringenden Gelegenheiten, diesen für sie einzigen Beweis jemals gebraucht, und alle dagegen bloß auf ihr eigenes ungültiges Zeugniß bestehen: so ist daraus zu schließen, daß die gantze Erzehrung Matthäi von den Hütern um das Grab Jesu falsch und ertichtet seyn müsse." See Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton, 2007), 112.

88 See Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 273: "Aber es waren jedoch andere obgleich viel weniger Juden, welche sagten, ihr Messias würde zwey mal, und zwar in gantz verschiedener Gestalt, erscheinen. Erst würde er in armseligen Aufzuge kommen, leyden und sterben: dann aber würde er aus den Wolken das Himmels wiederkommen und alle Gewalt und Herrschaft empfangen."

89 Ibid., 277–78: "Nein, die zukünftige Welt der Juden war hier auf Erden, und die herrliche Zukunft des Messia zu seinem Reiche sollte durch unsre Atmosphäre zu den Erdbürgern geschehen [...]. So dachten auch die Apostel und ihre ersten Nachfolger."

90 Ibid., 291: "Aber, man merke! Peter hat noch eine Erfindung zum listigen Hinterhalt [...]; es ist die Idee von dem jüngsten Tage und Welt-Gerichte, wohin die Christliche Kirche endlich gebracht ist; und niemand wird seyn, der diese Zeit zu erleben wünschet [...]."

91 Ibid., 314: "Weil aber die Heyden für sich und das Levitische Gesetz Mosis, als ein bloßes unterscheydendes National-Gesetz der Juden, nicht gebunden waren, und doch auch einen grossen Wiederwillen dagegen hatten: so konnten die Apostel, ihrem System ungeschadet, den Heyden solche unerträgliche Last schenken, und dieselben auf den Fuß der Prosletorum portae traktiren [...]."

92 Ibid., 347: "Das erste Mittel zur Annehmung des neuen Evangelii, womit die Apostel ihre Bühne eröffneten, war ihre eigen Begeisterung, und das Versprechen, daß die auf Jesu Namen getauften gleichfalls den heiligen Geist empfangen sollten."

the communal budget as well as the contributions from wealthier supporters,⁹³ the prospect of chiliasm,⁹⁴ not to mention skilled tricks disguised as miracles to impress a crude and superstitious populace⁹⁵ were other significant factors that led to an increasingly larger following. The apostles and early Christians gradually, though almost imperceptibly, advanced the deification of Christ.⁹⁶ Once this process was complete, however, the church fathers solidified this doctrine, partly by falsifying certain passages in the New Testament.⁹⁷ This is the case for a passage in 1 Tim. 3:16, which reads: Καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστίν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον θεός ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκὶ [And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness; *God* was manifested in the flesh]. Reimarus points out that there was substantial evidence that the passage had been intentionally corrupted. Cyril of Alexandria (376–444), for instance, does not appear to know about this passage because he did not use it in his polemical response against Julian the Apostate (332–363); and during the sixth century the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius (430–518) had Macedonius II, patriarch of Constantinople (495–511), exiled for falsifying the gospel, including said passage from Paul.⁹⁸

93 Ibid., 347: “Aber ein zweytes Haupt-Mittel, die Anzahl der Christen zu vermehren, war gewiß, die Gemeinschaft der Güter, welche die Apostel einführten, wodurch Tausende von Armen herbeygelockt wurden.”

94 Ibid., 368: “Man kann den Chiliasmus füglich für das dritte Mittel der Ausbreitung des Christenthums ansehen.”

95 Ibid., 371: “Ich will die übrigen verheissenen Wundergaben lieber als ein eintziges nämlich viertes Mittel, zusammen fassen, und zeigen, daß alles auf leere Einbildung und eitles Vorgeben hinauslauffe.”

96 Ibid., 438: “Celsus hatte jedoch so unrecht nicht gesagt, die Christen wollten Gott nicht anders als zugleich mit ihrem sogenannten Sohne Gottes verehren oder anbetzen; und dadurch setzten sie den Vater herunter, und erhöhen den Sohn über die Gebühr.” For a more comprehensive treatment of the process of the “deification of Christ,” see Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God* (New York, 2014). I am grateful to Sharon Herson for bringing this to my attention.

97 See Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 440: “[...] so wagte sich der unzeitige Eiffer der folgenden Kirchenlehrer für die Ehre ihres Heilandes an manchen Stellen der Apostel selbst, um sie nach diesem Sinn zu drehen oder gar zu verfälschen.”

98 Ibid., 440: “Es ist aber merkwürdig, daß Cyrus sich nicht auf einen andern Ort Pauli beruft, welcher nicht so zweydeutig seyn würde, wenn er richtig wäre. Er ist aus 1 Tim. III.v.16. *Bekanntlich groß ist das Geheimniß der Gottseligkeit: Gott ist geoffenbaret im Fleisch.* Ein Zeichen, daß Cyrus nicht also gelesen, wie es jetzt lautet, θεός ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκὶ, indem er sonst nicht könne versäumt haben, diesen Spruch Pauli Juliano entgegen zu setzen. Es ist schon im sechsten Saeculo Macedonius vom Kayser Anastasio darum vertrieben worden, weil er die Evangelia so wohl as diesen Spruch Pauli verfälscht; und überhaupt ist über dessen Leseart viel in der Alten Kirche gestritten worden.” On

Not surprisingly, the oldest codices all have the word δ [which] instead of θεός [God]. The passage should thus read: Καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστί τὸ τοῦ εὐσέβειας μυστήριον δὲ φανερώθη ἐν σαρκὶ [And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness which was manifested in the flesh]. This reading was also corroborated by versions in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Arabic. The term θεός appears only in codices from the tenth century or later. This also explains why none of the church fathers before Gregory of Nyssa (335–395) used the passage in their attacks against Arianism. According to Reimarus, Johann Jacob Wettstein (1693–1754) had noted in his *Prolegomena ad Novi Testamenti Graeci editionem* [Prolegomena to the Greek New Testament] (1730)⁹⁹ that the Codex Alexandrinus revealed traces of a later scribal hand that had changed the original letter combination OC into the contracted form ΘC. Reimarus may have overstated Wettstein's argument slightly in his favor. The latter had noted that he initially did not discover any traces of intentional falsification, but a thorough examination of the codex revealed that a line of ink had bled through the orginal o [omicron] giving it the appearance of a θ [theta]. A later scribe had then added the stroke in the middle and added the macron on top of the two letters to indicate that it was a contraction.

this matter, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York, 1993), 77–78.

99 Johann Jacob Wettstein, *H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ Novum Testamentum Graecum*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1752), 22: “Haec cum legissem, & ante biennum Angliam repetissem, rogavi amicum veterem, ut me in Bibliothecam Regiam deduceret; quod cum fecisset, & hunc Codicis *Alexandrinini* locum attento oculo, non nudo solum, verum etiam vitris haud unius generis armato, perlustrasset, pronunciavit, a prima manu nunquam aliter hic scriptum fuisse, quam OC: ego vero lineolam illam Millii & Berrimanni quaerens ad sinistram, inveni quidem, sed cum eam amico demonstrare vellem, non potui, quia evanuerat. Cumque alternis illa lineola modo appareret, modo dispareret, et ego hoc phasmate non parum percellerer, Amicus meus, qua erat sagacitate, causam statim indagavit, ostenditque illam lineolam non in ea pagina ubi legitur δέ φανερώθη, sed in aversa pagina ubi legitur κατ' εὐσέβειαν 1. Tim. vi. 3. esse scriptam, & constituere partem literae primae ε vocis εὐσέβειαν. Quoties enim libro in mensa posito folium, quod considerabamus, foliis sequentibus ita impositum erat, ut totum folium proximum contingeret atque tegeret, lineola illa conspici non poterat, quia membrana erat opaca: quam primum vero folium illud ita erigebantur, & a sequentibus separabatur, ut utraque pagina luce illustraretur, non haec tantum paginae aversae lineola, verum integrae literae & voces per membranam pellucidam conspiciebantur. Porro, si arcus literae Ε, quae extant in aversa pagina, accurate incideret in circulum nostri O, tunc linea transversa repraesentaret diametrum nostro O inscriptam, sicque Θ efficaret: cum vero arcus ille literae Ε incidat in centrum nostri O, linea illa tantum conspici potest in parte *sinistra*, licet ultra circulum aliquantum protendatur.”

By contrast, Jean Morin actually did discover traces of intentional falsification. In his *Exercitationes Ecclesiasticae et Biblicae* (1669),¹⁰⁰ he proclaimed that his examination of a very old Greek codex showed that a recent scribal hand must have inserted an additional θ [theta] before the original letter δ [omicron]. The text showed further traces of tinkering because parts of the ink had been scraped off the δ [omicron] in order to transform it into a final ζ [sigma].¹⁰¹

But Reimarus is critical about the reliability of the gospel accounts in general. It seems to him inconceivable that the deeds and sayings of Christ could have been put down accurately since they were recorded approximately twenty to thirty years after the death of Jesus. This also suggests that the apostles themselves did not intend to create a new canon aside from the Old Testament.¹⁰² None of the authors of the gospels could rely upon his own memory, and each resorted to reports from others.¹⁰³ Not surprisingly, these had a significant influence on how the writers shaped, modified, and falsified the events. According to Reimarus, doctrines such as the Virgin Birth were

¹⁰⁰ Jean Morin, *Exercitationes Ecclesiasticae et Biblicae* (Paris, 1669), pars 2, 59: “[...] quod manifestatum est in carne, ὁ ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκὶ. Versio Latina, ut vulgata. Alia manu & atramento extra lineae seriem addita est litera θ, & ambesa paululum ο, ut apareret sigma, sed praepostera emendatio facile conspicitur.”

¹⁰¹ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 440: “Die ältesten Codices haben O, welches Geheimniß; und damit stimmen die Lateinische, Syrische, Coptische, Armenische, Äthiopische, Arabische Übersetzungen überein. Die Codices, welche θεδς lesen, sind nicht älter als vom zehnten Saeculo. Kein eintziger Kirchenlehrer vor dem Gregorio Nyssena d.i. vor 380, hat diese Stelle wieder die Arrianer gebraucht. Die Betrügerey, so damit gespielt worden, ist noch in einigen Codicibus vetustis zu bemerken. Ich will von Wetstenii Codice, welchen er auch T.I. p. 22. anführt, nicht sagen, darin die lectio δς, oder OC, gewesen, woraus durch einen Querstrich durch das Θ, und über beiden Buchstaben, und zwar merklich von einer neueren Hand, das abbreviirte ΘC, oder θεδς gemacht worden. Allein Morinus hat aus einem sehr alten Codico Graeco, wo offenbar δ gestanden, nun aber auch ΘC oder θεδς stehet, erwiesen, daß vor dem O, welches die Zeile angefangen hatte, nachher, ausser dem Anfange der Zeile ein Θ vorgesetzt worden, und vor dem O die letzte Hälfte weggekratzt sey, so daß es numehr ein C oder Sigma vorstellete, und also ΘC, zusammen, ließe als θεδς.”

¹⁰² Ibid., 525–26: “Genug, die Apostel nahmen die Sammlung der alten prophetischen Bücher für den eintzigen göttlichen Canonem [...] und ließen sichs nicht in den Sinn kommen, daß sie einen zweyten Theil der Bibel schreiben und Original-Autores werden wollten [...].”

¹⁰³ Ibid., 529: “Es kommt dazu, daß Lucas die Gewißheit seiner Nachrichten nicht auf sein eigen Sehen und Hören, sondern auf die völlige Glaubwürdigkeit der Tradition gründet, welche er von den Augen-Zeugen und Dienern Jesu empfangen hätte.”

neither part of the teachings of Jesus nor of the apostles, but were invented by both Luke and Matthew, mainly to underscore claims of Jesus as the Messiah.¹⁰⁴

Given such harsh treatment of Christian doctrine and revelation, it is not surprising that Reimarus abstained from sharing his views with the outside world. It would undoubtedly not only have terminated his amicable exchange with the Vatican librarian and suspended his Dio project, but probably would also have ended his celebrity status as distinguished professor at the *Gymnasium illustre* and well-respected citizen of his native Hamburg. Judging from the public reactions when Lessing published portions of the *Apologie*, it seems clear that Reimarus would most certainly have become the object of denunciations and hostilities. Reading through the *Apologie*, a first look would hardly suggest that its author and the editor of the famous Hamburg edition of Dio's *Historiae romanae* were one and the same person. Not only is it written in German, but its lack of scholarly apparatus does not seem to betray the profound depth of classical scholarship that Reimarus had demonstrated there. Nor does it appear to follow in the footsteps of Reimarus's famous mentor Wolf, whose work as a Hebraist had made Hamburg a landmark in the field. A perfunctory glance may suggest that Reimarus abandoned the scholarly legacy of his great mentors Fabricius and Wolf altogether and undertook a purely philosophical and rationalist attack on revelation, as earlier scholarship on Reimarus has suggested:¹⁰⁵ in its biting criticism of the moral integrity of the biblical protagonists, the *Apologie* resembles to a great extent the work of Pierre Bayle (1647–1706),¹⁰⁶ who had shown similar fervor in his entry on "David" in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697); the *Apologie*'s polemical tone, however, moves it much closer to the works of a Voltaire,¹⁰⁷ who had castigated the crude culture of ancient Israel; and its rationalist tone recalls the work of Peter Annet,¹⁰⁸ who had equally concluded that the resurrection was a fraud. Yet, a more careful look suggests that such assessments are only partly true. Reimarus's criticism relies most heavily on his philological skills and his learning in Jewish antiquities.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 534: "Jesus sollte als der verheissene Messias vorgestellet werden, in welchem alle Weissagungen und Zeichen erfülltet wären. Nun deuteten einige den Ort des Jesaiä, Siehe eine Jungfrau wird schwanger werden [...]. Also brachte es ihr Zweck so mit sich: Jesus muste auch von einer reinen Jungfrau geboren seyn."

¹⁰⁵ For an overview, see my introduction.

¹⁰⁶ The literature on Pierre Bayle is quite extensive. For a good introduction, see Thomas M. Lennon, *Reading Bayle* (Toronto, 1999); see also Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 331–41.

¹⁰⁷ Voltaire, *La Bible enfin expliquée* (1776).

¹⁰⁸ Peter Annet, *The Resurrection of Jesus Considered* (1744).

The complexity of Reimarus's analysis and how indebted he was to previous traditions of scholarship become clear in his attack on the doctrine of the Messiah, which appears at various points throughout the *Apologie*. This should by no means come as a surprise, since both Judaism and Christianity share the hope of the coming or, in the case of the latter, the return of the Messiah. Yet, it is this very concept that also sets them apart. In fact, many of the Jewish-Christian controversies from antiquity through the early modern period revolve around the concept of the Messiah, with each group trying to demonstrate how a certain passage, for the most part from the Hebrew Bible, does or does not point to Jesus as the fulfillment of its respective prophecy. The term מָשִׁיחַ [anointed one] appears (only) 38 times in the Hebrew Bible and implies a number of different things. It occurs in reference to an Israelite king or monarch, a priestly figure, or the patriarchs.¹⁰⁹ The biblical idea of "anointing" is intrinsically linked to the Davidic monarchy and its charismatic leadership.¹¹⁰ This monarchical figure is fully human, his advent is neither miraculous nor supernatural, and he will die like any other human: of old age, on the battlefield, or due to illness.¹¹¹

But the situation is more complicated than this and goes beyond mere titular expressions.¹¹² None of the instances in the Hebrew Bible makes reference to an apocalyptic ruler whose arrival marks the dawn of the salvation era,¹¹³ and many of the passages that are later used by Jewish and Christian sages in support of any messianic claims do not even use the term מָשִׁיחַ.¹¹⁴ Among them are passages in Isaiah, in which עֲלֵה מִמְּרָא [a young woman] "will give birth to a son," whom she will call עֶמְּנוּ אֶל [Immanuel],¹¹⁵ or the suffering servant, who was "stricken by God" for the iniquity of humankind and who "bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."¹¹⁶ Christian scholars

¹⁰⁹ See William Scott Green, "Introduction: Messiah in Judaism: Rethinking the Question," in *Judaism and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner et al. (New York, 1987), 1–13; also Jimmy Jack McBee Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis, 1992), 39–51.

¹¹⁰ Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Concepts of *Māšīah* and Messianism in Early Judaism," in *The Messiah*, ed. Charlesworth, 85.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 94.

¹¹² George Macrae, "Messiah and Gospel," in *Judaism and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Neusner, 169–85.

¹¹³ Roberts, "The Old Testament's Contribution to Messianic Expectations," 39.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁵ Isa. 7:14.

¹¹⁶ Isa. 53:4–12.

throughout the early modern period (and before) made ample use of such passages to prove the messiahship of Jesus. Matthias Flacius, for instance, pointed out that Scripture “was full of such delightful and salutary descriptions about the coming of the Messiah.”¹¹⁷ These references may come in various forms and shapes. They may, as Flacius points out, appear in the form of punishment, as was the case in Genesis 3:15, where God vouches to put enmity between the snake and the woman, or in the form of a prayer, as in Psalm 22:1, where the psalmist expresses his distress at being abandoned by God.¹¹⁸ One of the more comprehensive treatments of the subject came from Salomon Glassius. In his *Onomatologia Messiae prophetica* (1624),¹¹⁹ the theologian from Sondershausen systematically scoured the Hebrew Bible for passages that he believed referred to Christ. The list included not only well-known instances such as שָׁלֹום [prince of peace]¹²⁰ or בֶן־אָדָם [son of man]¹²¹ but also ostensibly unlikely and less flattering designations such as תַולְעַת [worm].¹²² Where it appears, in Psalm 22, the speaker refers to himself as a “worm [...], scorned by others, and

¹¹⁷ Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, part 2, 405: “Talibus amoenis & salutaribus descriptionibus adventus Meschiae, plena est Scriptura.”

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 404: “Aliquando in forma Poenae. Gen. 3.v.15. *Ponam inimicitias inter te & mulierem; inter semen tuum & semen ejus: & ipsum conteret et caput tuum.* Aliquando in forma Precationis. Psal. 22.v.2. *Deus meus, Deus meus, quare dereliquisti?*”

¹¹⁹ Salomon Glassius, *Onomatologia Messiae prophetica: qua orthodoxa de Jesu Christo θεανθρώπῳ doctrina ex nominibus, quae in Scritura Veteris Test. ei attribuuntur, methodice dispositis & succincte explicatis, eruit ac proponitur* (Jena, 1624).

¹²⁰ Ibid., 249–50: “Huc pertinet appellatio שָׁלֹום *Princeps pacis*, qua Christus insignitur Esa. 9.v.6.quia 1. veram pacem, & totam bonorum coelestium plenitudinem (quae voce יְלִשָׁׂׂה *pacis* denotatur) nobis reparavit. 2. quia regnum suum pacifice administrat, Ecclesiam contra hostes in pace tuetur, tandemque ad aeternam pacem eam transferet [...].”

¹²¹ Ibid., 72–73: “Ita vocatur Ps. 8.5. & Chaldaeo בֶּן־אָנָּחָה Dan. 7.v.13. Et in N.T. Messias de seipso loquens, plerunque τὸν οὐδὲν τοῦ ἀνθρώπουν se vocat, Matth. 16,13.c.26, 24. c. 25.v.31. Est autem appellatio deducta ex vulgari consuetudine, qua quisvis homo בֶן אָדָם *filius hominis* dicebatur, Job 16, 21. Jer. 49, 33. Ezech. 2,1. cap. 3,4. &c. Alias מֶלֶךְ בָּנֵי *filiis hominis*, dicuntur in scriptura v.T. homines plebeji, infimo loco nati, quibus opponuntur בָּנֵי *filiis viri*, h.c. honestiores, magnates, dignitate aliqua pollentes, Ps. 49,3. Unde quidam existimant appellationem *Filiis hominis* Christo attribui, non ad denotandam solum veram humanam naturam, sed ad exprimendum etiam exinanitionis statum. Sed Matth. 26,31. Christus ad dextram Patris exaltatus, & in gloria sua revertens ad judicium, *Filius hominis* vocatur.”

¹²² Ibid., 103–6: “Ita appellatur Psal. 22,7. Ubi ipse Mediator de sua passione ita loquitur: *Et ego Vermis, & non Vir: Opprobrium hominum & contemptus populi. Vox תַולְעַת vermen, vermiculum significat, qui ab omnibus teritur & contunditur.*”

despised by the people.”¹²³ The obvious explanation would be that this was a reference to the passion and suffering of Christ, which is in line with the portrayal of the Messiah as the suffering servant. Drawing on a rich body of philosophical and antiquarian scholarship, Glassius is able to meticulously dissect the meaning of the mysterious messianic reference. He identifies the noun תולעת as a “crimson-worm,” which, as he explains, originates in the seed of a specific shrub. Its “seeds and fruits are red, just as is its sap, and they are swarmed by red worms, whose skins are drenched in color.”¹²⁴ The noun תולעת then might have the same root as the noun עלע [crimson], which appears, for instance, in Isaiah 1:18, where the sins are described “like crimson” but “shall become like wool.”¹²⁵ According to Glassius, this description fits as a perfect reference to Christ. He was like a worm in his suffering, despised and rejected by all. However, the “drops of his crimson blood” created the most magnificent vestment, “through which, when we put it on, we can appear beautifully furnished in the face of God,” as is referenced by the “garments of salvation” in Isaiah 61:10.¹²⁶ Not surprisingly, a more elaborate discussion of the *Coccidae* family came from Samuel Bochart, the doyen of biblical flora and fauna. Drawing on a myriad of sources in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Coptic, Bochart points out that the term תולעת may at times also appear in conjunction with the term שְׂנִי [scarlet], as was the case in Leviticus 14:4, where crimson yarn is used as part of a purification ritual after the recovery of a leprous person. The term שְׂנִי, however, may also appear by itself, as in Genesis 38:28, where it is translated as “crimson thread,” and the same holds true for תולע, which often appears to signify *coccum*, the Latin for “scarlet” or “cloth.”¹²⁷

¹²³ Ps. 22:6.

¹²⁴ Glassius, *Onomatologia*, 104: “In specie autem (uti & vox עולע) vermiculum notat, qui ex grano cuiusdam fruticis nascitur (idque in Armenia, Asia, Hispania & Lusitania fieri perhibent) & granum ipsum κόκκος coccus nominatur. Frutex iste dicitur esse surculus, cuius grana sive baccae sint rubeae, liquore item rubeo, scateantque vermis rubris, quorum colore tinguntur panni.”

¹²⁵ Isa. 1:18 (BHS): אָסֵן־אַדִּימָנוּ בְתֻלָּע בְּצֹמֶר יְהִי

¹²⁶ Glassius, *Onomatologia*, 104: “Quae specialis significatio Christo pulcre applicari potest. Factus quidem est vermis in sua exinanitione, ab omnibus prostritus & despectus: sed ex purpureis sanguinis ejus guttis preciosa illa vestis, & purpura magnifica paratur, qua induiti coram Deo pulcre exornati comparere possumus. Esa. 61,10.”

¹²⁷ Samuel Bochart, *Hierozoicon sive bipertitum opus animalibus S. Scripturae* (Frankfurt, 1675), part 2, 623–24: “Est & in plantarum vermis minimum triginta locis. Sic Exod. 25.v.4. Et hyacinthium, & purpuram, שְׂנִי, תולעת שְׂנִי vermum coccum, Levit. 14.v.4. & saepe alibi. Nec semper junguntur haec voces. Nam שְׂנִי pro cocce quandoque solum occurrit, ut

At times, however, even more adventurous philological exercises were necessary to justify that a specific passage in question was indeed a reference to Jesus. This was especially the case when the Hebrew original seemed somewhat obscure. One location that caused considerable debate among theologians was Genesis 49:10, in which Jacob blesses his sons, telling Judah that the “sceptre shall not depart from [him], nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.”¹²⁸ Starting in the Middle Ages, the passage was often cited in the context of Jewish–Christian debates. Each party tried to support its position by pointing to a massive body of exegetical literature.¹²⁹

The literal meaning of the first part of the biblical verse seems to be fairly straightforward. Cocceius in his *Lexicon et commentarius sermonis Hebraici et Chaldaici* (1669) pointed out that שָׁבֵט [staff] was frequently used in reference to dominion or rule, as is the case in Ezekiel 19:14, which uses the phrase שְׁבַט לְמַשׂוֹל [the scepter to rule].¹³⁰ This still provided plenty of room for debate, since there had not been a king in Israel from the time of Zedekiah, as the author of the anonymous medieval Jewish polemical work, the *Nizzahon Vetus*, pointed out.¹³¹ What was much less clear from a philological point of view, however, was the meaning of the term שִׁילֹה [Shiloh]. Was this a proper noun, the name of a place, a person, or some other form? If so, what was the root of the word? Not surprisingly, the verse was featured prominently in commentaries that focused on obscure and seemingly problematic passages.¹³² Partly

Gen. 38.v.28.v.30 [...]. Et vicissim תּוּלָע, id est *vermis*, in nonnullis Scripturae locis, per se *coccum* significat, sine additione vocis טֶן."

¹²⁸ Gen. 49:10 (BHS): לְאִישׁוֹר שְׁבֵט מִיהוֹדָה וּמִתְּהֻקָּק מִבֵּין רְגָלָיו עַד פִּירְבָּא שִׁילֹה.

¹²⁹ See David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Philadelphia, 1979), 60–62.

¹³⁰ Cocceius, *Lexicon et commentarius sermonis Hebraici et Chaldaici*, 846: “Sceptrum, virga, quae geritur a regibus, ut signum potestatis & imperii. Scepter. LXX. σκῆπτρον. Ezech. 19:14 שְׁבֵט לְמַשׂוֹל שְׁבֵט virga, sceptrum, ad dominandum [...]. Sic vs. 8. Gen. 49:10 שְׁבֵט מִיהוֹדָה non recessit sceptrum ex Judah & legislator ex medio pedum ejus. h. e. rex, qui sit ex Juda, & legislator, non simul recessit. Non recessit rex, saltem legislator. Nam recessit sceptrum in Zedekia, sed legislator non recessit, nisi quum Christus regnum in gentibus erexit [...].”

¹³¹ See David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages*, 60: “The answer is that they are refuted by their own words, for how can one maintain that the kingdom of Judah did not cease until Jesus? There was, after all, no king in Israel from the time of Zedekiah, for even in the days of the second Temple there was no king in Israel but only governors subordinate to the kings of Media, Persia, or Rome.”

¹³² See, for instance, August Pfeiffer, *Dubia vexata Scripturae sacrae sive loca difficiliora Vet. Test.* [...] (Dresden, 1679), 229–38.

responsible for this was Jerome's Vulgate, which translates it into *qui mittendus est* [who is to be sent]. This translation, however, assumes that the root of the word הַשֵּׁלֶת was שָׁלֹת [to send], which would require replacing the final *he* [ה] with a *het* [ח]. This observation was a welcome break to Christian polemicists, who were ready to question the reliability of the Hebrew text.¹³³ According to the Jesuit scholar Jacques Bonfrère (1573–1642), Jerome's Latin translation indicated that the original form must have been the passive participle חַשְׁלָתֶה [to be sent],¹³⁴ and the sixteenth-century humanist and biblical scholar Agostino Steuco (1497–1548)¹³⁵ from Umbria suggested that Jerome still had the original text at his disposal but that the passage was intentionally obscured by Jewish polemicists during the Middle Ages in order to conceal further evidence for the true messiahship of Christ.¹³⁶

A reference to the Greek version does not really help solve this riddle. The Septuagint uses the passive participle of the verb ἀπόκειμαι [to be laid up], which renders הַשֵּׁלֶת into τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ [the things stored up for him].¹³⁷ In translation, the Septuagint passage then reads: "until there come the things stored away for him." Justin Martyr had already indicated in his *Dialogue with Trypho* that there was an older, more correct version of the Septuagint, which, instead of τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ [the things stored away for him] read φῶτα ἀπόκειται [for whom it is stored up]. This would render the passage as: "until comes the

¹³³ See chapter 2 on this subject.

¹³⁴ Jacques Bonfrère, *Pentateuchus Moysis commentario illustratus* [...] (Antwerp, 1625), 328: "Depravatum hunc ab eis locum, probabile facit Hieronymi versio, qui haud dubie in Hebraeo legit חַשְׁלָתֶה schaluach, missus, quod participium passivum etsi praeteritum sit, usurpant tamen etiam Hebrei passivo futuro, cum futuri temporis participio careant."

¹³⁵ On Steuco, see Ronald Delph, "Emending and Defending the Vulgate Old Testament: Agostino Steuco's Quarrel with Erasmus," in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*, ed. Erika Rummel (Leiden, 2008), 297–318.

¹³⁶ Agostino Steuco, *Opera omnia, quae iam extabant*, vol. 1: *Veteris testamenti ad Hebraicam veritatem recognitio, sive in Pentateuchum, annotationes* (Venice, 1591), 127: "Nos tametsi nova quaedam asseremus, suum tamen cuique liberum permittimus iudicium. Nam primo ubi nunc Hebraice habetur הַשֵּׁלֶת, Adducor facile ut credam tempestate Hieronymi fuisse חַשְׁלָתֶה aut תַּלְשָׁלֶת. Shilach, aut saliach, ut loco he, fuerit chet: quae litterae maximam affinitatem. Eaq; vox si eo modo scribatur, significat missum. Existimo igitur hunc locum corruptisse Iudeos, ut pleraque alia ab eis esse depravata comperimus, ubi commode posset fieri, ut saepius admonituri sumus. Quod ergo clare de Messia diceretur, & ad religionem Christianam penitus tenderet, per unius litterae immutationem, ipsi ad nescio quid aliud transferre conati sunt."

¹³⁷ Gen. 49:10 (LXX): οὐκ ἐκλείψει ἄρχων ἔξ Ιούδα, καὶ ἡγούμενος ἐκ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ, ἔως ὅτι τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ

one for whom it is stored up.”¹³⁸ Based on this evidence, early modern scholars such as Cornelius à Lapide (1567–1637) have argued that the Hebrew original must have read **שְׁלִוָּה** [whose it is] rather than **הַשִּׁילָׁשׁ**, which would be the same as the combination of the relative pronoun **אֲשֶׁר** [that which] and **לֹן** [to him].¹³⁹ This perspective was not just confined to Roman Catholic scholars, but was also embraced by Protestant sages such as Grotius, who claimed that the Vulgate version appeared most credible to him.¹⁴⁰

But not everyone was convinced that the text had been corrupted. The theologian Amandus Polanus (1561–1610) from Basel¹⁴¹ affirmed that the original term must always have been **הַשִּׁילָׁשׁ**. Since there cannot be any doubt that it was a reference to the Messiah, Polanus points out, it could be a derivative from either the term **הַלִּיָּשׁ** [afterbirth], which would be an indication that the Messiah was born as a child, or from **מְלִוָּשׁ** [peace], an indication that he will bring peace to the world.¹⁴² Of course, this does not reflect particularly well on Polanus’s knowledge of biblical Hebrew morphology, given the fact that

¹³⁸ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 120:4: δύνατόν δὲ ἦν μοι, ἔφην, ὡς ἀνδρες, μάχεσθαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ τῆς λέξεως, ἢν ὑμεῖς ἐξηγεῖσθε λέγοντες εἰρήσθαι· Ἐως ἂν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ. ἐπειδὴ οὐχ οὕτως ἐξηγγήσαντο οἱ ἐβδομήκοντα, ἀλλ Ἐως ἂν ἔλθῃ δὲ ἀπόκειται.

¹³⁹ Cornelius à Lapide, *Commentaria in Pentateuchum Mosis* (Antwerp, 1714), 317: “Primo, Septuag. Pro Silo legentes **תְּלִשׁ** Schelo (quasi **נ** positum sit pro **ו** affixi: hae enim litterae **ehevi** quiescentes subinde commutantur) vertunt, *donec veniat* (scilicet Christus) *cui repositum est*, nimirum sceptrum & regnum Iuda uti legunt & intelligunt S. Ignatius, Iran. Hieron. & Ambr. Vel, *Donec veniant reposita ei*, puta ampla regna, trophyea & dona Messiae, quae Iudea reposita & reservata sunt, usque ad tempus Messiae, uti legunt & intelligunt S. Cyprianus, August. & Chrysost.”

¹⁴⁰ Grotius, *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum* [1644], in *Hugonis Grotii Opera Omnia theologica* (London, 1679), t. 1, 26–27: “Unde apparet immerito a Iuliano Christianos accusari mutatae hic versionis, cum ipsorum nihil id intersit. Itaque Iustinus adversus Tryphonem modo his, modo illis verbis utitur, affirmatque codices LXX. Sui temporis habuisse φόροκειται [*cui reposita sunt*], quod de quibusdam codicibus facile credo. Priori autem modo hunc locum pro se adducunt Clemens, Alexandrinus, Cyprianus, Origines, Eusebius, Cyrilus. Mihi maxime se probat versio Latina, ut sit **הַשִּׁילָׁשׁ** pro **חַלִּישׁ**. Quid enim facilius, quam aut variante dialecto, aut scriptura aberrante, mutari inter se litteras tam vicinas & soni & figuratas?”

¹⁴¹ On Polanus, see Heiner Faulenbach, *Die Struktur der Theologie des Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf* (Zurich, 1967), as well as Robert Letham, “Amandus Polanus: A Neglected Theologian?”, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 21 (1990), 463–76.

¹⁴² Amandus Polanus, *Syntagma theologiae Christianae*, vol. 1 (Hannover, 1610), 512: “Ita Schilo Messias est sic dictus vel quasi **לֹן** **שְׁלִוָּה** schai lo, munera ei: vel a **הַשִּׁילָׁשׁ** schiljah, quod debuerit Messias nasci infans: vel a **מְלִוָּשׁ** schalom, id est, pax, quod pacem toti mundo inferre debuerit.”

the final *mem* could not be simply eliminated, as Salomon Glassius noted. To Glassius, the form must be a derivative from **שְׁלֹחַ** [to be quiet, at ease] and signify something along the lines of guardian of peace and happiness.¹⁴³ Equally sceptical was the response of many early modern scholars to the possibility of linking the passage to Psalm 78:60, which mentions the **מִשְׁבֵּן שְׁלֹחַ** [tabernacle of Shiloh]. August Pfeiffer noted that, despite the phonological and morphological similarity in both instances, the Hebrew term of the city by that name lacked the letters *he* and *yod*. In addition, Genesis 49:10 did not appear to refer to a geographical location.¹⁴⁴

These philological debates did not go unnoticed in Hamburg. In 1698, Sebastian Edzardus, Reimarus's later colleague who was then still an adjunct lecturer at the University of Wittenberg, published a little treatise entitled *Jacobi patriarchae de Shiloh vaticinium a depravatione Johannis Clerici in Pentateuchum commentatoris assertum* [the prophecy of the father Jacob about Shiloh against the distortion of the interpreter Johannes Clericus on the Pentateuch affirmed]. Notoriously critical of biblical prophecy and messianic signs, Le Clerc had proposed that the passage must be understood historically rather than metaphysically. There was no need to read a messiah into it.¹⁴⁵ He pointed out that the letters *waw* [ו] and *yod* [י], for instance, may at times appear interchangeably in the position of the second radical in a Hebrew root without changing the meaning of the word, as it was the case in **חַיל**

¹⁴³ Glassius, *Onomatologia*, 220: “Polanus in syntag. Theol. lib.i. c. 37. addit, posse a **שְׁלֹחַ** deduci, h.e. pax, quod pacem toti mundo afferre debuerit. Sed hoc non potest dici propter radic. □ quae omitti non debebat [...]. Nobis B. Lutheri, Forsteri, Schindleri, & aliorum placet sententia, **שְׁלֹחַ** esse Nomen (formae **קִיטֹּזֶר fumus**, & **קִימֹשׁ urtica) a** **שְׁלֹחַ** *tranquillus, pacificus, felix, fortunatus fuit*, & significare *Salvatorem pacificum, seu pacis & felicitatis autorem, tranquillum, felicem, fortunatum, prosperum & augustum* [...].”

¹⁴⁴ Pfeiffer, *Dubia vexata Scripturae sacrae sive loca difficiliora*, 230: “R. Lipman Nizz. n. 46. intelligit urbem Silo. At vero ejus nomen aliter scribitur, scilicet sine י, vel **שְׁלֹחַ**, sine ה. Et satis proterve exponitur **עַד שִׁיבָּא לְשִׁילָה** *עד כי בוא שליה* **עַד שִׁיבָּא לְשִׁילָה** *donec veniant Siluntem.* Et eventus repugnat. Quid enim est: *Non recedet sceptrum a Juda, donec veniant Siluntem,* uncturi scilicet Saulem? Neque enim sceptrum ante Saulem erat Judae collatum, adeoque nec Saule uncto poterat a Juda auferri. Quid? Quod Saulem in Silo unctum Scripturam S. nuspia dicat.”

¹⁴⁵ Jean Le Clerc, *Genesis sive Mosis Prophetae liber primus* (Tubingen, 1733), 345–46: “Sunt qui putent esse **שְׁלֹחַ** nomen Messiae, undecumque tandem ea vox deducatur, cum propter traditionem Majorum, a Chaldaeis Paraphrastis expressam, tum quia litterae **שְׁאָשְׁלִילָה** pro earum in numeris potestate, eamdem summam ac litterae vocis **מֶשִׁיחָה** maschiah efficiunt; nempe, 358. Sed conjecturae Rabbinorum, ex Arithmetica litterarum potestate, incertissimae sunt; nec traditio adeo accurata umquam fuit, ut circa singula Scripturae loca semper urgeri possit.”

[to dance] and [to dance] or in צוֹחַ [to blossom] and צוֹחָה [to blossom]. Based on this analogy, Le Clerc suggested that the same must be true for שיל and שול [seam/lower part of the body]. A seam is at the lower part of a vestment, which means that שיל must mean “end.” Accordingly, the meaning of the word must be simply another reference to the end of the rule of the tribe of Judah, similar to Jeremiah 51:13, which recounts the end of the rule of Babylon.¹⁴⁶ Edzardus did not agree. How could anyone doubt the messianic reference if even Jewish sources corroborated this claim?¹⁴⁷ Philologically, Edzardus pointed out, Le Clerc got it all wrong. In fact, there is little effort necessary to see that שיל can only mean *pacifier* [peace-maker], since it can be directly derived from the root שללה [to be quiet, at ease].¹⁴⁸

It seems very plausible that these discussions were fully integrated in the faculty's lectures at the *Gymnasium*. We have seen this, for example in chapter 2, where Reimarus discusses Spencer, Toland, and Marsham. Future pastors would need to know not only the messianic predictions of the Old Testament but also arguments of profaners of Scripture such as Le Clerc, who dismissed them. A look at the course catalogue of the *Gymnasium* confirms this assumption. During the academic year 1731/32, Reimarus was scheduled to teach a course, entitled *Observationes selectas ad loca difficiliora v.t.* [Select observations

¹⁴⁷ Sebastian Ezardus, *Jacobi Patriarchae de Schiloh vaticinium a depravatione Johannis Clerici, in Pentateuchum Commentatoris [...] (London, 1698)*, 33–34: “Misera vero Clericum, qui, ut verbis Augustini parumper immutatis utar, non intelligit, quod Judaei intelligent! Christiani Interpretes Clericum ad Christum ducunt, hunc נָשִׁיר esse admonent, sed non sequitur recte monentes. Accedunt Judaei, vident Messiam esse, de quo Jacobus vaticinatur, quamvis, quisnam veras Messias sit, ignorant, sed quod a Judaeis hoc in loco cernitur, Clericus tamen videre non potest.”

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 70: "Quanto facilius, quanto expeditius, quanto luculentius totum conficitur negotium, si *pacificatoris* significatione vocabulum שילָה convertamus? Non prolixa circuitione utimur: non elaboramus acriter desudamusque, ut violenta interpretatio quodam quasi colore se commendet: שילָה a directo deducimus, quod verbum ad pacem tranquillitatemque describendam pertinere tot perspicuis Divini Codicis exemplis manifeste constat."

on rather difficult passages in the Old Testament],¹⁴⁹ and one year later he lectured on the *Loci insignioribus v.t. de Messia & Personarum Divinarum Trinitate ac pluralitate* [Rather prominent passages in the Old Testament about the Messiah and the Trinity and plurality of the Divine Persons], which would most likely have included a discussion of passages such as Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 53:4–12 or Psalm 22:1.¹⁵⁰ According to the course description, those passages were expounded, drawing on “the testimony of the Jews, followed by counter-arguments and the responses to them, and by theological propositions.”¹⁵¹ This implies that Reimarus’s approach was fully in line with an orthodox apologetic tradition, which is illustrated, as we have seen earlier, by his lecture *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum* from 1731.¹⁵² In one place, he points out that it “benefits our faith, if we see that Christ was prefigured in the Old Testament” and that “all criteria of the true Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.”¹⁵³ Jesus’ human nature is confirmed by passages in the Old

¹⁴⁹ *Catalogus paelectionum et exercitiorum quae in Gymnasio Hamburgensi inde a verno initio A.C. MDCCXXXI. usque ad veris initium MDCCXXXII publice et privatis fuerunt habita quaequae deinceps annuo spatio usque ad idem initium proxime sequuturi anni MDCCXXXIII. I.N.J.C. habebuntur* (Hamburg, 1731), StA HH, A 559/8, 6–7* (unpaginated): “Proxime anno, si Deus vitam porro viresq; largiatur, publice incipiam suppeditare *Observationes selectas ad loca difficiliora v.t.* servato ordine librorum, capitum, commatum. Dabo in illis summa paelectionum et exercitiorum Scriptorum, qui recentiore aetate aliquid Codicem hebraeum illustrandum, seu justis Commentariis, seu separatis Exercitationibus, Observationibus, Dissertationibus, notatu dignum attulerunt [...].”

¹⁵⁰ *Catalogus paelectionum et exercitiorum quae in Gymnasio Hamburgensi inde a verno initio A.C. MDCCXXXII. usque ad veris initium MDCCXXXIII. publice et privatis fuerunt habita quaequae deinceps annuo spatio usque ad idem initium proxime sequuturi anni MDCCXXXIV I.N.J.C. habebuntur* (Hamburg, 1732), StA HH, A 559/8, 6–7* (unpaginated): “Instat nunc annus alius, quem Deo clementer annuente tribuam publice *Loci insignioribus v.t. de Messia & Personarum Divinarum Trinitate ac pluralitate* sic illustrandis, ut paecipua haec capita Theologiae Christianae ab omni aevo credita esse appareat, eademque fundamentis solidis sacrae Exegeseos superstrui tuto a futuris Theologis queant.”

¹⁵¹ *Catalogus paelectionum et exercitiorum quae in Gymnasio Hamburgensi inde a verno initio A.C. MDCCXXXIII. usque ad veris initium MDCCXXXVI. publice et privatis fuerunt habita quaequae deinceps annuo spatio usque ad idem initium proxime sequuturi anni MDCCXXXV I.N.J.C. habebuntur* (Hamburg, 1733), StA HH, A 559/8, 6: “[anno superiore], Loca insigniora v.t. quae de Messia & Trinitate Personarum divinarum agunt, sic interpretatus est, ut post sensum verborum literalem, suppeditaret exegesis uberiorem tum testimonia Judaeorum, deinde objectiones adversariorum cum responsionibus, denique Theses Theologicas, postremo Scriptores ad singula loca conferendos.

¹⁵² See chapter 2, note 93.

¹⁵³ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum* (1731), ed. and intr. Peter Stemmer (Göttingen, 1983), 42: “Sane mirifice juvat fidem

Testament that speak of the “seed of the woman” in Genesis 3:15, the “seed of Abraham” in Genesis 22:18, the “seed of David” in 2 Samuel 7:12, or the “son of man” in Daniel 7:14.¹⁵⁴ According to the book of Daniel, his “dominion is an everlasting dominion” and his kingship “shall never be destroyed.”¹⁵⁵ A careful survey of several passages of the Old Testament reveals, as Reimarus points out, that Jesus’ life is already perfectly laid out there: his conception, birth, and royal descent; the flight to Egypt; his miracles; his triumphant entry into Jerusalem on a donkey; his betrayal and suffering; and his resurrection on the third day.¹⁵⁶

Of course, his tone in the *Apologie* is markedly different. To Reimarus, Jewish messianism was closely connected to the fortune of the ancient Jewish state. It became important only after the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple complex. Initially, the anticipated figure had nothing in common with an eschatological savior or spiritual leader, but was simply a powerful king from the Davidic line, who would restore kingship in Israel.¹⁵⁷ This anticipation still

nostram, si Christum in Veteri Testamento secundum utramque naturam, secundum officia et status singulos praefiguratum videamus, atque sic intelligamus, cum omnia criteria veri Messiae in Jesu Nazareno impleta esse, tum fideles Veteris Testamenti eadem ratione salvatos esse, qua nos.”

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 42: “Natura Christi humana designatur phrasibus: semen mulieris, Gen. 3,15; semen Abrahae, Genes. 22,18 [sic]; semen Davidis, II. Sam. 7, 12; filius hominis, Dan. 7,14 [...]. Speciatim regium officium describitur Psalm. 2,6.10.11.12; Jer. 23,5.6; Psalm. 110,1; Dan. 7,14 [...].”

¹⁵⁵ Dan 7:14.

¹⁵⁶ Reimarus, *Vindicatio dictorum Veteris Testamenti in Novo allegatorum*, 43: “Status exinanitionis quoad omnes fere circumstantias accurate repraesentatur in Veteri Tto [sic]: conceptio, Jer. 31,22; Jes. 7,14; nativitas e familia David, II. Sam. 7,12 sq.; Jer. 23,5.6; tempore jamjam intereuntis regni Judaici, Genes. 49,10; Bethlehami, Michae 5,2,3; stante adhuc templo II., Hagg. 2,8; Malach. 3,1; ex virgine, Jes. 7,14; fuga in Aegyptum, Hos. 11,1 collato Num. 24,8; species ejus contemta, Jes. 52,14; 53,2 sq.; doctrina, Deut. 18,15 sq.; Jes. 42,1 sq.; 61,1.2,3; miracula, Jes. 35,4 sq.; passio, ad quam se praeparabat/Hierosolymam vectus, Zach. 9,9; pueris Hosanna acclamantibus, Psalmo 118,25.26; proditio, Ps. 41,10; venditio pro XXX argenteis, Zach. 11,12; angor infernalis, Ps. 8,6 et Ps. 69,1. 2.3; sudor sanguineus, Jes. 63,3; desertio disciplinorum, Zach. 13,7; consilia maligna gentium adversus ipsum, Ps. 2,2,3; vulneratio, Jes. 53,5; flagellatio, Ps. 129,3; optimatum funesta conspiratio adversus ipsum, Ps. 22,13.14; objectum contemtum hominum, Ps. 22,7.8; Jes. 50,6; potus aceto et felle mixtus, Ps. 69,[22]; pferforatio manumpedumque, Ps. 22, 17; Zach. 13,6; vestimentorum distributio per sortem, Ps. 22,19; supplicium inter sceleratos, Jes. 53,12; tolerantia in passione, Jes. 53,7; mors Dan. 9,21 sq.; Jes. 53,9; sepultura Jes. 52,10; mora in sepulchro per triduum, Jonae 2,1. Status exaltationis describitur quoad corporis incorruptionem, Psalmo 16,10; Jes. 25,8, quoad resurrectionem die tertio, Jon. 2,11 [...].”

¹⁵⁷ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. I, 721: “Wir haben die allgemeinen Gründe gesehen, aus welchen erhellet, daß die Verheissungen eines grossen Königes, welcher das verfallene Reich der

prevailed during the second temple period, which is confirmed by the appearance of a number of false messiahs during the time of Jesus.¹⁵⁸ With this hope remaining unfulfilled, the Pharisees looked for clues in Scripture about the coming of the Messiah, often reverting to allegorical interpretations.¹⁵⁹ Rabbinic Judaism provided also the context for the idea of a dual messiah. One of them is the suffering Messiah ben Joseph/Ephraim, who would die in battle against the evil forces of Gog and Magog. The other is the triumphant Messiah ben David, who would emerge victorious and rule among the nations.¹⁶⁰

Christian scholars did not turn a blind eye to this body of material and used rabbinic sources elaborately in their commentaries on both the Old and the New Testament. How could they make a pass on another good opportunity to prove that even the rabbis had already referred to Christ as the Messiah, even though they may have found it hard to admit? Pioneering among these savants was the skilled Cambridge Hebraist John Lightfoot (1602–1675), whose *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae* (1658) served as a model to some theologians on the continent.¹⁶¹ Among them was Christian Schoettgen (1687–1751) from Dresden, a protégé of the Lutheran theologian Johann Cyprian (1642–1723),¹⁶² who took Lightfoot's principles to heart and drew extensively on Talmud and Midrash in his scriptural exegesis. Schoettgen pointed out that he could not deny the fact that the ancients did speak of a dual messiah.¹⁶³ However, the Hebrew language often uses various modes to express the same circumstance. For instance, Schoettgen explained, “in the story of the creation of the first

Juden wieder aufrichten und noch weit herrlicher machen sollte, bloß einen weltlichen König betreffen, mit dessen Erwartung die Propheten, in den letzten Zeiten, da man den Untergang des Jüdischen Reichs voraus sehen konnte, das Volk in süsser Hofnung hinhalten, und zu einer standhaften Beobachtung des Mosaischen Gesetzes bewegen wollten.”

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 725–726: “Daß doch die Juden noch nach Zorobabel's Zeit, unter dem zweyten Tempel, die Hofnung eines weltlichen Erlösers beständig unterhalten haben, wissen wir aus den Zeugnissen des Neuen Testaments, und aus den Erscheinungen mancher falscher Messien nach Christo.”

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 726: “Die Allegorie hilfft aus; als eine Kunst aus allen alles zu machen.”

¹⁶⁰ Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton, 2012), 237–71.

¹⁶¹ See Newton E. Key, “Lightfoot, John (1602–1675),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16648>, accessed 3 July 2014].

¹⁶² Georg Müller, “Schöttgen, Johann Christian,” in *ADB* 32 (1891), 412–17.

¹⁶³ Christian Schoettgen, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae, in theologiam Judaeorum dogmaticam antiquam et orthodoxam de Messiae impensae*, vol. 2 (Dresden and Leipzig, 1742), 260: “Negare non possum, ab antiquis etiam Messiam duplicum, Davidis scilicet & Josephi filium memorari.”

man the same verb ‘to create’ is expressed by three forms, namely בָּרָא [to create], עֲשָׂה [to do, make], and יֶצַר [to form].” The kabbalistic tradition renders this into a “triple Adam,” the Adam of creation, the Adam of formation, and the Adam of action.¹⁶⁴ According to Schoettgen, this principle holds also true for the dual messiah, who, just like the historical Adam, remains one and the same person.¹⁶⁵

Reimarus’s judgment was less favorable. Pharisaic allegorical interpretation, paired with a sense of desperation, led to exegetical excesses, which are still evident in the Talmud, where, for instance, “R. Ḥiyya b. Abba said in R. Johana’s name” that “[a]ll the prophets prophesied [all the good things] only in respect of the messianic era.”¹⁶⁶ The Apostles initially shared a belief in a powerful king-messiah, but they incorporated the idea of a suffering savior who would eventually return after Jesus’ death.¹⁶⁷ Evidence for this can be found in Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*¹⁶⁸ and in the Talmud as well [fig. 11].¹⁶⁹ In fact,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 361: “In historia creationis primi hominis illud ipsum creandi verbum triplici modo exprimitur, **ברָא**, **עֲשָׂה**, **יֶצַר**. Hinc igitur Cabballistae triplicem Adamum faciunt, **אדָם דְּבִרְיהָה**, *Adamum creationis*, **אדָם דְּעִשְׂיהָה**, *Adam formationis*, **אדָם הַמִּשְׁיחָה**, *Adamum factio[n]is*.”

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 362: “Nos jam verba Doctorum de quatuor Spiritibus ad Messiam applicamus [...]. Ecce hic duo sunt Messiae, & ecce Messias est unus.”

¹⁶⁶ b Sanh. 99a: אמר רבי חייא בר בא א"ר יוחנן כל הנביאים قولן לא נתנבאו אלא לימות המשיח.

¹⁶⁷ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 274–75: “Zum Verständniß dieser Verheissung muß man wissen, daß die Juden selbst zweyerlei Systemata von ihrem Messias hatten. Die meisten erwarteten in solcher Person einen grossen weltlichen Regenten auf dem Stuhl Davids, der sie von der Sklaverey und Drangsal unter den Heyden erretten, und ihnen andere Völker unterthähnig machen würde. Und in diesem System war nichts als Herrlichkeit; kein vorgängig Leyden, kein Tod, keine Auferstehung, keine Wiederkunft; sondern das gewünschte Reich des Himmels sollte, nach dieser Hoffnung Israels, mit der ersten Zukunft des Messias, alsbald angehen. Dies war auch in der That das erste System der Apostel bis an die Kreuzigung und den Tod Jesu [...]. Aber es waren jedoch andere obgleich viel weniger Juden, welche sagten, ihr Messias würde zwey mal, und zwar in gantz verschiedener Gestalt, erscheinen. Erst würde er in armseligem Aufzuge kommen, leyden und sterben: dann aber würde er aus den Wolken des Himmels wiederkommen und alle Gewalt und Herrschaft empfangen.”

¹⁶⁸ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 49:1: καὶ γὰρ πάντες ἡμεῖς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀνθρωπὸν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων προσδοκῶμεν γενήσεσθαι, καὶ τὸν Ἡλίαν χρίσαι αὐτὸν ἐλθόντα. ἐὰν δὲ οὗτος φαίνηται ὃν δὲ Χριστός, ἀνθρωπὸν μὲν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γενόμενον ἐκ παντὸς ἐπίστασθαι δεῖ. ἐκ δὲ τοῦ μηδὲ Ἡλίαν ἐληγμαθέναι οὐδὲ τούτον ἀποφαίνομαι εἶναι.

¹⁶⁹ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 274: “Der Jude Trypho bey dem Justin Martyre gesteht dies zwiefache Zukunft des Messias: sie findet sich im Talmud, und in den folgenden Schriften der Juden [...]”

Justin. Dial. p. 234. et 335. summa legationis: οἱ ἄρχεις
τοῦ ἀδεροῦ καὶ τροποῖς ἐπίγειαις ἀπὸ θυμὸν τυρούς τατιάσιον
πλέον. οἱ σωματικῶν ὑγιαὶς οἱ γαστρικαὶ ἀντοῖς πλευ-
ραὶ ἀντοῖς τοῦ μητροφόρου τυρούς σπόλεις τατιάσιαι
πλαθεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ σαρκοῦ, πλανώσις τοὺς ἀνδρεώποντος λέγον-
τες Ηγγείας ἀντοῖς ἐκ τηκτῶν καὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ἐδήλω-
πισαν.

Testull. c. 21. Apolog. Nihilo minus tamen primores, quorum intererat et scelus divulgate, et populum valetatem et famularum filii a fide revocare, usurpatum à discipulis iactabentur. Euseb. IV. 18. H. E.

Mundus futur-

Witfins in Miscell. T. I. lib. II. Diss. VI.

Chr. Schoettgen in Horis Hebr. T. I. Duf. II. de seculo hoc est fuit.

Dav. Millius in præf. Opp. Rhenfedi

*Sankt. f. 98. i. ubi synonyma sunt, mundus futurus
et quando generis Aeternitatis*

Murash Coheloth f. 72.3. omnes qui non profelyti
sunt in mundo futuro.

in hoc mundo, tales futuri sunt in mundo future.

Sabbath f. 63. 1. fol. 151. 2. Sanktor. f. 91. 2. f. 99. 1.
ibidem ex parte hunc mundum et dies Messiae

נִילֵּי בְּרִיאָה nihil interest inter hunc mundum et eis regna nisi subjectio regnum.

אַחֲרִית הַיּוֹם
for light. ad. Matth. xii. 32. et John x. 6.

Tanquam sol. 77.3. nuncii Dei in mundo futuro

Tanckum fol. 77.3. nunc Dei in mundo
et M. III. 1. doctas Messia etiam in d^oci

id. fol. 9. 2. mundus futurus ubi non regnabit

inclusus affectus, sed convertentib; filii Israhel. Hos. III. 5.

Targum ad 1 Reg. IV. 33. in seculo hoc est in seculo

בָּעֵלְפָא דָאַת, דְּמַשְׁיחָא
futuro Messia

FIGURE 11 Fragment of an annotated bibliography, compiled by Reimarus for his discussion of the Messiah in the Apologie.

STA HH, 622-1 REIMARUS, 622:1 A 7: "AUSZÜGE AUS DER LITERATUR." COURTESY OF STAATSARCHIV HAMBURG.

it was telling, Reimarus observed, that New Testament authors did not refer to any messianic passages in the Old Testament other than those also cited in the rabbinic corpus, with the only difference that they were applied to Jesus.¹⁷⁰ This is essentially the methodology Christian theologians followed in their approach to the Old Testament. But, as Reimarus points out, scholars such as Flacius denied the fact that ancient Jews viewed the Messiah ben Joseph and the Messiah ben David as two distinct figures rather than the trials and tribulations of one single person.¹⁷¹ Needless to say, Reimarus believed that church fathers and Christian theologians stretched the limits of allegory even beyond what the rabbis had done.¹⁷² This becomes obvious, for instance, with passages such as Genesis 49:10. Reimarus concedes that the Hebrew term *מִלְשָׁנָה* is undoubtedly obscure. Nevertheless, the context alone eliminates the suggestion that this might be a reference to a geographical location. Clearly, the author of the passage must have had a person in mind whose political power led to the end of the leadership of the tribe of Judah.¹⁷³ Based on Reimarus's low opinion of rabbinic exegesis with its inflated use of allegory, it comes hardly

¹⁷⁰ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 726: "Und im Neuen Testament herrscht eben dieselbe Meynung, nebst der gantzen Pharisäischen Erklärungs-Art, nur daß sie auf Jesum von Nazareth angewant ist. Es ist fast keine Stelle des A.T. von den Evangelisten und Aposteln auf Jesum gedeutet worden, welche nicht von den Rabbinern überhaupt auf den künftigen Messias gleichfals wäre gezogen worden."

¹⁷¹ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 274, note c: "Die alten Juden wusten von keinem doppelten Messia, sondern wollten nur dessen doppelte Zukunft, oder vielmehr seinen doppelten Zustand andeuten; wie Flacius in *Clavi Scripturae*. P. II. p. 407. sqq. [...] und andere mit guten Gründen behaupten." See Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae*, part 2, 407–9: "Duo Messiae adventus a Prophetis praedicti sunt: alter cum humilitate, ad redimendum; alter vero cum gloria & potestate, ad judicandum. Duplicem hunc Messiae adventum allegorice, ut multa alia, tradiderunt antiquiores Thalmudistae: per Messiam filium Joseph, vel Ephraim, & per Messiam filium Davidis, intellexerunt [...]. Constat ergo, duos esse Messiae adventus; non tamen duos, sed unum tantum Messiam Prophetas praedixisse venturum: cuius primum adventum, maxima cum humilitate, equitantis super asinam, juxta vaticinium Zach. 9. patres nostri receperunt. Secundum vero adventum, cum gloria & potestate ad judicandum, firmissime expectamus, iuta oraculum Dan. 7.c."

¹⁷² Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 727: "Und es ist wohl nicht zu leugnen, daß die Kirchenväter und neueren Theologi, insonderheit Coccejani, in solcher Deutungsart, vermöge der Jüdischen Regeln, noch viel weiter gegangen sind, als die Juden selbst oder das Neue Testament gethan [...]."

¹⁷³ Ibid., 732: "Was ist Schiloh? ein Wort das nur ein eintzig mal an dieser Stelle vorkommt? Kann man wohl leugnen, daß es sehr dunkel sey, und die Bedeutung auf ein ungewisses Rahten beruhe? Wer kann wohl daraus ein gantzes Lehr-System schließen, und sicher darauf bauen? Wir finden eine Stadt Schiloh oder Schilo; und hier muß doch wohl eine

as a surprise to him that the Targum Onkelos paraphrases the passages as “a ruler will never depart from the house of Judah, nor a teacher from his children’s children forever—until the Messiah comes,”¹⁷⁴ using the term מֶשִׁיחַ אָמֵן.¹⁷⁵ According to Reimarus, the passage, however, did not appear as one of the major proof texts in the New Testament, which may suggest that it gained prominence much later, when early Christian and rabbinic allegorical interpretation ran rampant.¹⁷⁶ Of course, Reimarus concedes, it is possible that the term might refer to a political leader, but this is still a far cry from the spiritual messianic figure many Christian theologians made him out to be.¹⁷⁷ A major cause for this might be the misguided attempt of the authors of the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term into τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ [the things stored up for him], because this would be the equivalent of the Hebrew שלָה [whose it is], not of ישְׁלָה.¹⁷⁸ Reimarus suggests that it might very well be a personal name, possibly even a variation of the name שאול [Saul], which is morphologically very similar to אלישָׁ, because both terms mean “asked for/prayed for.”¹⁷⁹ From a philological point of view, the form could be explained as an instance of apocope and syncope.¹⁸⁰ The original form could have been תַּאֲלִילָה, the plural of the term תַּאֲלִילָה [request]. In fact, the Hebraist and theologian Matthäus Hiller

Person bedeuten, die der Gewalt des Stammes Juda entgegen gesetzt ist, und welcher die Völker anhängen und gehorsam werden.”

¹⁷⁴ Onkelos, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Bible Text: Genesis*, ed. Israel Drazin and Stanley M. Wagner (New York, 2006), 337: [...] לא יעדי נעד שלטן מדיבית יהודה וספרא [...] גבנוי עד דיני משיח.

¹⁷⁵ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 733: “Die Chaldäischen Dollmetscher übersetzen es ausdrücklich Messias. Aber das ist von solchen Juden kein Wunder, die den Messias allerwerts zu finden wusten wo er durchaus nicht zu verstehen war.”

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 733: “Hergegen wird dieser Ort im N.T. nicht auf Christum gezogen, da er doch an vielen Stellen zum Haupt-Beweise hätte dienen können, wenn anders *Schiloh* der Messias hiesse.”

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 734: “Summa, das Wort ist crux Grammaticorum und Theologorum: und wenn wir auch einen Messias daraus machen, so folgte noch lange nicht, daß er ein geistlicher König seyn müste [...].”

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 734: “Die Griechischen Dollmetscher geben es τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, ohne Verstand, wenn sie gleich *schello* anstatt *Schiloh* gelesen hätten.”

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 732: “Sollte es auch wohl auf den eigenen Namen einer Person anspielen? Dergleichen Anspielungen sind in dieser Weissagung, die dem Jacob in den Mund gelegt wird, vom Anfange bis zu Ende. So hätten wir hier eine Verwandtschaft mit dem Namen des ersten Königs Saul aus dem Stamm Benjamin. Denn *Schaul* heist der Erbetene, und *Scheil*, in der ähnlichen Form, heist eben dasselbe.”

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 732: “Davon würde *Scheiloh*, anstatt *Scheiloth*, per Apocopen, seyn die von vielen verlangte oder erbetene Person, oder per Syncopen *Schiloh*, anstatt *Scheilo*, wie so

(1646–1725) from Tübingen had shown that the letter *aleph* may at times be eliminated without altering the meaning of the word.¹⁸¹ According to Hiller, this was a fairly common occurrence in the Hebrew language, as for instance in מִתְּחָרֵב, possibly a derivative from חֲרָב [sinners].¹⁸² From Reimarus's point of view, this would explain the form לִשְׁלָה instead of לִשְׁאָה, whereas the *holem* and the *he* at the end were most likely still a remainder of the ending *holem waw* and *taw*. Based on this argument, שִׁילָה might have been a remainder of the construct form אִישׁ שְׁלָה, “vir postulationum” or “man of supplications,” which would, according to Reimarus, make sense if it was properly applied to the historical context.¹⁸³ Since the tribe of Judah had managed to monopolize political and military power, exemplified by טְבַשׁ [scepter] and מֶחֱזֶקֶק [the commander's staff], the other tribes demanded a king. Samuel selected Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, which broke the dominance of the tribe of Judah. Although Reimarus admits that this explanation might be somewhat speculative, he points out that this explanation might be much better than an attempt to read any kind of spiritual ruler into this passage, as both Christian and rabbinic scholars had done.¹⁸⁴

We can already see that engaging with these arguments required considerable philological skill as well as a profound knowledge of rabbinic sources and how Christian Hebraists and theologians made use of them. How steeped

wohl sonst, als besonders in der Radice *Schaal* gebräuchlich ist; daher Schelah, anstatt *Scheelah*, *Schaltiel*, anstatt *Schëaltiel*.”

¹⁸¹ On Hiller, see Gustav Moritz Redslob, “Hiller, Matthäus,” in *ADB* 12 (1880), 24–25.

¹⁸² Matthiaeus Hiller, *Dissertatio philologica de versione nominis יהִשְׁלָה occurrentis in vaticinio Jacobi, Geneseos cap. XLIX. Commate decimo* (Tübingen, 1696), 17–18: “Nec pauca sunt ex adpellativis, quae Aleph medium post scheva mobilem amiserunt [...]. מִתְּחָרֵב peccantes: Eccles. 8.12. pro pleno בְּאָשָׁרִים choteim.”

¹⁸³ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 733, note y: “Allein ich halte die Endung vielmehr für ein Nachbleibsel der terminationis pluralis apocopatae, da denn *Schiloh* so viel ist als *Isch Scheilothen*, *vir postulationum*.”

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 733: “Der Stamm Juda hatte nämlich bey aller Gelegenheit bisher den Vorzug und die oberste Macht in Kriegs-und Friedens-Zeiten gehabt, welches durch den Stab oder Scepter (*Schebet*) und durch die richterliche Macht (des *Mechokek*) angedeutet wird. Nun verlangten alle Stämme einmühlig einen König vom Samuel, und der setzte ihnen den König Saul aus dem Stamm Benjamin, und alle Völker d.i. alle Stämme der Israeliten hingen ihm an und gehorchten ihm; wodurch die vorzügliche Macht des Stammes Juda aufgehoben ward [...]. Es ist nur eine Muhtmassung, das gestehe ich; aber bey dunkelen Stellen muß eine Muhtmassung Statt finden; und diese hat sowohl in der Forma grammatica des Wortes *Schiloh*, als in der Art des prophetischen Stili, und in der Historie Grund; wenigstens ist gewiß, daß alle bisherigen Erklärungen des Wortes *Schiloh* entweder grammaticae falsch sind, oder doch keinen geistlichen Erlöser beweisen [...].”

Reimarus was in this culture of learning becomes evident from a fragment of his radical work preserved at the Goethe-Museum in Frankfurt [fig. 12].¹⁸⁵ Written in Latin, it refers to the diverging views in ancient, medieval, and early modern Judaism on the importance of the doctrine of the Messiah. The doctrine was questioned by Jewish sages such as Joseph Albo (1380–1444), who affirmed that the idea of a messiah was not a central tenet of ancient Judaism and became an important element only in rabbinic Judaism.¹⁸⁶ In his work entitled *Sefer ha-'ikkarim* [Book of Principles], the famous rabbi from Spain expressed his disagreement with Maimonides, who had argued that a refusal of a belief in the coming of the Messiah was identical to a refusal to believe in one of the principles of the Mosaic law.¹⁸⁷ Albo based his argument on a passage in the Babylonian Talmud, where R. Hillel is quoted saying that “there shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah.”¹⁸⁸ The short fragment in Latin could be classified as an annotated bibliography on the subject, very much in the tradition of Reimarus’s mentors Fabricius and Wolf. Reading the *Apologie* through the lens of this bibliography, its similarities to Reimarus’s edition of Cassius Dio’s *Historiae Romanae*, and his debt to his famous mentors become quickly evident. Aside from references to the passage in b Sanhedrin 99a and Albo’s work, Reimarus cites Georg Eliezer Edzardus’s edition of the Talmudic tractate Avodah Zarah¹⁸⁹ and Johann Christoph Wagenseil’s Latin translation of the *Mishnaic* tractate *Sotah*.¹⁹⁰ We encounter Ibn Ezra’s commentary on Psalms, Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with*

185 Hermann Samuel Reimarus, “Messias iam venit,” *Frankfurt Goethe-Museum*, 60983–84.

186 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 725: “Der Rabbi Joseph Albo giebt die Sache gar auf, und sagt, der Punkt von dem Messias sey kein Haupt-Artikel des Glaubens, habe auch keinen Grund in der Schrifft selbst, sondern nur in den Traditionen”; see Dietrich Klein, *Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768)*, 142.

187 Joseph Albo, *Sefer ha-'ikkarim*, ed. and trans. Isaac Husik, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1946), 44: “Similarly one who does not believe in the coming of the Messiah, which Maimonides counts among the principles of the Mosaic law, is, according to him, put into a class with those who deny one of the principles of the Mosaic law, who are excluded from the community under that law and have no share in the world to come”; on Albo, see Sina Rauschenbach, *Josef Albo (um 1380–1444): jüdische Philosophie und christliche Kontroverstheologie in der frühen Neuzeit* (Leiden, 2002).

188 b Sanh. 99a: ר היל אומר אין ליהם משיח לישראל שכבר אכלוهو בימי חזקיה; see Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus*, 223–26.

189 Georg Eliezer Edzardus, *Tractatus Talmudici Avoda Sara sive de Idolatria* [...] (Hamburg, 1705).

190 Johann Christoph Wagenseil, *Sota, hoc est liber Mischnicus de uxore adulterii suspecta* (Altdorf, 1674); on Wagenseil, see Peter Blasenbrey, *Johann Christoph Wagenseil und seine Stellung zum Judentum* (Erlangen, 2004).

Messias jam venit. fol. 99 col. 2, fol. 99, col. 1.
ita nonnulli Tudecom. In tract. Sanhedr. cap. I. p. 11. A Hillel conf. Schudt in deli-
cet. Non habetur tractat. Messiam iuxta dñm eo potest. At, Heb. phil. p. 128. et
tempore Hisiae. Quam sedis yadethiam R. losyphus his opt. Schudt in deli-
cat, confutat. Condonat hoc ijsip. Hillel Domini dicit, qui dixit quae-
vera non flet. Nam quando loquitur Hisiae? nonne sub templo
prior? At Zacharias vaticinatus est sub templo secundo. Clos. L. 410. s. op. Maran
IX. q. epulata filia Zion etc. R. Abarbanus quoq. varia ac fundosa
explicatione vim huius confessionis eludere conatur. Cap. XIV.
Illi hec omnia His. Dodes, scilicet, quae ex Gemara His. et
Berachot affect lightfoot ad Cap. II. 1. Matth. ih. Horis Hebreus.
Puerorum in Synagoga Tudeca. C. XXXVII. p. 442. Chay Lenn-
Purim. Ad Maimonides Tract. de fest. caput xl. pp. 442. in notes.
De losypho, vaticinium de Messia oriente ut viagapaxum uocem-
modante. Sed si lugd. Conf. 14. fol. 1. p. 249.
Tempus jam affligerat patientes ap. Petrus. Comp. II. 9. p. 534. 773
loum ex Avoda Zara huius pertinet, melius ac filio explicabit.
vide ap. Veneratio papa. in Haliach. Olam. p. m. 21. p. 109.
et Etzadi Avoda Zara praecep. 10. 149.
gem. Bab. Sanhedr. fol. 89. 2. Rabbi hixit sic vivis sit Messias
Rabbi noster sanctus talis est, sic mortuus, da uell. lightfoot.
Hor. Heb. ad Matth. II. 1. p. 257. a. c. plura b. p. 257. advoct.
et Prudens.
Nisi enim rabbi tudem sanctum papa Messia habuerunt, quia
sicut illa portabat iniquitates nostras. Quod uero illa? tradidit
an nos laboravimus dolere dentis. Et lightfoot Hor. ad Matth. VIII. 17.
309.
Tudecorum aliquid concilio in Hungaria deliberatum, quod in his prop-
tan longam a tristitiate Christi captivitatem faciendum esset, dicunt
Messiam jam venisse. Schudt. Memorial. P. II. lib. VI. c. 9. p. 150.
& Iacob Lorria credidit esse Messias filius Joseph a Chajim Vital. Wolf.
Publ. Heb. I. p. 62. ubi plures hanc in re uel citantur.
Negat hunc articulum fundamentalum iste de Redendo Messiae,
R. Losyphus Albo in Medicina Orat. I. c. 1. Et Hillellem optime
hac. eius scribendum non uult quod Messiam in Hippo graecus fuerit
deinde. Et contra Articulum de Messia non in sua. Et tantulum
in 4. editione fundatur. Iste Allix. p. 411.
termini duximus Messias ab aliis constituti sed jam praetercessi
recensens. ab Ede. A. S. C. I. p. 244.
Natura patet sub ejusdem sententi. sed vani respondunt, ubi
nunc habetur illa. p. 250. p. 309. Nomina ei sedunt, ut inter nationes
tamen et adventum Messiae distinguant. Huius sententia et Re-
uniorum accedit hoc. Etiam ad illud Cantus cap. VII. Rex legatus est
ita dubitaverit legitimus. Tryphon apud Justin. p. m. 226. B. Alexos
et c. 4. neque syriaca, nec iudeo, nec grecos ista uerba non uolu-
tus. Exordio erat alia uerba regis David. Secundum illa reges et reges
Hijas. XI. 6. uerba, nec quis enim doli regis horum vid. p. 236. D.
conf. et Regis dei deputati de Messia cum Tudeo Basile. A. D. 1639.

FIGURE 12 Early draft of Reimarus's discussion of the Messiah in the Apologie, entitled "Messias iam venit."

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Trypho, and the works of Maimonides, edited by the Swedish Hebraist Gustav Peringer (1651–1710),¹⁹¹ a student of Wagenseil. Along with these works, we come across Lightfoot's *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*, Johann Jacob Schudt's *Compendium Historiae Judaicae* (1700),¹⁹² an early treatise by Sebastian Edzardus, entitled *Ex philologia Hebraica & Judaeorum magistris* (1695),¹⁹³ and Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebraea* for information on the Jewish mystic turned messiah Isaac Luria (1534–1572).¹⁹⁴ It is an impressive array of sources, which serves as a testimony not only of Reimarus's mastery of these disciplines but also how much they formed the cornerstone of his radical attack.

Throughout the *Apologie*, we encounter instances when Reimarus's philosophical skill proves essential to exposing discrepancies in the biblical text. This is then used as the premise to discard Christian doctrine altogether. It becomes especially evident whenever the accounts in the gospels provide contradictory or mutually exclusive information, something Christian theologians had

¹⁹¹ Gustavus Peringerus, *Officium Messiae Judaici. Hoc est Mosis F. Majemonis Tractatus de Regibus Caput undecim [...]* (Upsala, 1692), 7–8: “Notum illud R. Hillelis in capite illo, quod a principaliore sui initii voce Chelek inscribitur, tractatus Sanhedrin. ריהל אמר אן להם משיח לישראָל שכבר אכלהו בימי חזקה Messiam, quia dudum eo potiti sunt tempore Hiskiae. quam tamen sententiam R. Joseph his excusat, contutaque: *Condonet hoc ipsi, sc. Hilleli Dominus; qui dixit quae vera non sunt. Nam quando vixit Hiskia? nonne sub templo priore? At Zacharias raticinatus est sub templo secundo.* Cap. ix.9 *Exulta Filia Zijon, & c.* R. Abarbanel quoque varia ac sinuosa explicatione vim hujus confessionis eludere conatur, Cap. xiv. libri Rosch Amana. His addas, si libet, quae ex Gemara Hieros. Berachot assert Lightfootus ad cap: ii. 1 Matth. in *Horis Hebraicis. Buxtorfius in Synagoga Iudaica Cap. xxxvi.* p. 442. Ex adverso auctor hic noster, & cum eo Judaeorum plurimi ob peccata, & feram gentis suae resipiscentiam, diutius tardantem Messiam praestolantur avide. Rationes, quibus stoliditatis suae convincantur Judaei, nos non producimus: cum & facillime aliunde peti possint; & multi haec in re fuerint S. Patres, aliquie ex Christianis, viri eruditissimi consummatissimum.”

¹⁹² Johann Jacob Schudt, *Compendium Historiae Judaicae* (Frankfurt, 1700).

¹⁹³ Sebastianus Edzardus, *Ex Philologia Hebraica & Judaeorum Magistris [...]* (Wittenberg, 1695).

¹⁹⁴ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea [...]*, vol. 1 (Hamburg, 1715), 672: “Utrinque varia alia vitae momenta & miracula quoque, si credere fas est, de nostro relata inveneris, comparanda omnino cum praefat. R. Solom. Salman, praemissa R. Chajim Sacerdotis מקור ים in qua nonnulla a Naphtali illo de Chajim Vitali & Isaaco Loria minus recte dicta castigantur. Ea hic repetere nihil refert, cum ex dictis pateat, quanta sit Loriae inter Iudeos existimatio, quae inde quoque elucescit, quod Chajim Vital eum Messiam fil. Joseph fuisse crediderit, id quod ex quadam ejus commentatione refertur in laudata praefat. ad עמק המל p.5.b.col.4. Confer etiam Io. Andr. Eisenmengeri Judaismum Detectum Parte II. p. 725. sq. & Vener. Io. Wulferum in Theriaca Judaica p. 59.& 71.”

to grapple with. If, however, “the principal author [of the gospels] is the Holy Spirit,” who had been “promised to the apostles by Christ so that he may lead them to all truth [...], not only in their preaching, but also in their writings,” then this means that the gospel accounts cannot be contradictory.¹⁹⁵ Rather, it must be the interpreter’s own shortcomings to presume falsely contradictions where there can in fact be none. In his influential *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*, Matthias Flacius points out:

there is certainly nothing anywhere in Scripture that is a true contradiction [...]; rather, those passages that appear to be contradictory are judged as such due to our own fault and ignorance, because we have not understood either a particular issue or a mode of expression, or we have not spent enough time pondering the context.¹⁹⁶

Not surprisingly, then, orthodox theologians were often hard-pressed to come up with solutions for instances where the biblical θεόπνευστοι seemed to contradict each other. Their efforts are reflected in works such as Michael Walther’s *Harmonia totius Sanctae Scripturae* (1630),¹⁹⁷ August Pfeiffer’s *Centuria diffciliorum Scripturae locorum* (1704),¹⁹⁸—the emphasis is, *nota bene*, on the *diffciliorum locorum*—Gerhard Johannes Vossius’s *Harmoniae evangelicae* (1656),¹⁹⁹ or Georg David Kypke’s *Observationes sacrae in Novi Foederis libros* (1755),²⁰⁰ as well as in numerous concordances, such as Jean Le

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, Abraham Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti illustrata: in quibus emphases vocum ac mens dictorum genuina e fontibus, contextu & analogia Scripturae eruuntur* [...] (Dresden and Leipzig, 1719), 5: “Auctor primarius est *Spiritus Sanctus*, quia non tantum πάσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος est, Apostolo teste 2. Tim. III. 16. & sancti Dei homines loquuti sunt, ac scripserunt φέρομενοι ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἀγίου 2. Pet. I. 21. sed ideo etiam Apostolis promissus a Christo est *Spiritus Sanctus*, ut duceret eos in OMNEM VERITATEM Joh. XVI.13 non solum in praedicando, sed etiam scribendo [...]”.

¹⁹⁶ Matthias Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae, seu de sermone sacrarum literarum in duas partes divisae* [...] (Leipzig, 1695), pars 2, 39: “Nulla omnino usquam est vera contradic-tio Scripturarum: (sicut Quintilianus de legibus dicit) sed quae pugnare videntur, nostra culpa ac ignorantia talia esse existimantur: quia vel res, vel sermonem, non intelligimus; vel circumstantias non satis expendimus.”

¹⁹⁷ Michael Walther, *Harmonia totius Sacrae Scripturae sive brevis et plana conciliatio locorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti* [...] (Strasbourg, 1630).

¹⁹⁸ August Pfeiffer, *Diffciliorum Scripturae Locorum* [...], in Pfeiffer, *Opera omnia quae extant philologica*, t. 1 (Utrecht, 1704), 1–454.

¹⁹⁹ Gerhard Johannes Vossius, *Harmoniae evangelicae de passione, morte, resurrectione, ac adscensione Iesu Christi, Servatoris nostri, libri tres* (Amsterdam, 1656).

²⁰⁰ Georg David Kypke, *Observationes sacrae in Novi Foederis libros ex auctoribus potissimum graecis et antiquitatibus* [...], 2 vols. (Breslau, 1755).

Clerc's *Harmonia evangelica* (1699),²⁰¹ where the four gospels are put side by side to emphasize their agreement. One such instance is the gospel account of the period between Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.²⁰² According to Christian tradition, Jesus held his Last Supper on Thursday, followed by his trial and execution on Friday. The empty tomb was then discovered on Sunday. If, however, we take a closer look at the gospel accounts, then it becomes clear how Reimarus was able to notice certain disagreements between the four versions:

Matthew 27.62–28.1	Mark 16.1–2	Luke 23.54–24.1	John 19.31–20.1
<p>27.62 <i>The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, ‘Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day [...].</i></p>		<p>23.54 <i>It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning [Καὶ ἡμέρα ἥν παρασκευῆς καὶ σάββατον ἐπέφωσκεν].</i>⁵⁵ The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid.</p> <p>56 <i>Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. [ὑποστρέψασαι δὲ ήτοίμασαν ἀρώματα καὶ μύρα.]</i></p>	<p>19.31 <i>Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath [...].</i></p> <p>³⁹ Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, <i>bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.</i>⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews [...].</p>

²⁰¹ Jean Le Clerc, *Harmonia evangelica cui subjecta est Historia Christi ex quatuor Evangelii concinnata* (Amsterdam, 1699).

²⁰² On earlier attempts to date the crucifixion and the death of Jesus, see Philipp E. Nothaft, *Dating the Passion: The Life of Jesus and the Emergence of Scientific Chronology (200–1600)* (Leiden, 2011).

(cont.)

Matthew 27.62–28.1	Mark 16.1–2	Luke 23.56–24.1	John 19.31–20.1
		<i>On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.</i>	
	16.1 When the Sabbath was over [Καὶ τὸ μὲν σάββατον ἡσύχασαν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ σαββάτου], Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome <i>bought</i> spices [ἡγόρασαν ἀρώματα], so that they might go and anoint him [ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν].	[Καὶ τὸ μὲν σάββατον ἡσύχασαν κατὰ τὴν τοῦ σαββάτου], Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome <i>bought</i> spices [ἡγόρασαν ἀρώματα], so that they might go and anoint him [ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν].	
28.1 After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning [Οψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων], Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.	16.2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb [καὶ λίαν πρωΐ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων]	24.1 But on the first day of the week [τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων], at early dawn [ὅρθου βαθέως], they came to the tomb, taking the τῶν σαββάτων splices they had	20.1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed.
		ἐρχονται ἐπὶ τῷ μνημεῖον ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἥλιου].	

Although there seems little doubt that Jesus was crucified and died on the Day of Preparation, there seems to be a disagreement about the events that followed his death. According to the gospel of Luke, the women “who had come with him from Galilee” prepared spices and ointments [ἡτοίμασαν ἀρώματα καὶ μύρα] before the Sabbath, but they did not go to embalm the body because they observed the laws of the Sabbath [κατὰ τὴν ἐντολήν], which commanded them to rest from “evening to evening.”²⁰³ This would mean that the women must have rushed to buy the spices in the few remaining hours on Friday before sunset. In the gospel of Mark, however, the women “καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου [...] ἤγρασαν ἀρώματα, ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν” [bought spices when the Sabbath was over so that they could anoint him].

Numerous attempts were made to reconcile the two passages. Among the more adventurous theories was an effort by the sixteenth-century Italian Barnabite Agostino Tornielli (1543–1622), who suggested that the women mentioned in Luke, “who had followed Jesus from Galilee and who had prepared spices and oil after returning from the tomb on the Day of Preparation,” might have been “different from [those mentioned in Mark].” In fact, Tornielli points out, “it could very well have been the case that some women bought ointments on the day when Jesus died,” whereas “others might have done so when the Sabbath was already over.” Alternatively, the spices could have been insufficient for the first embalming and so the women “immediately bought more once the Sabbath was over and hurried to prepare them so that early in the morning at dawn they could go and anoint the body of Jesus with devotion.”²⁰⁴ Tornielli arrives at this conclusion partly because Mary, the mother of Jesus, is explicitly mentioned at the cross but does not appear to have been part of the group that discovered the empty tomb. This convinced the devout Roman Catholic Tornielli that “the most blessed Virgin” must have known that her son

²⁰³ Lev. 23:32: “It shall be to you a Sabbath of complete rest, and you shall deny yourselves; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening you shall keep your Sabbath.”

²⁰⁴ Agostino Tornielli, *Annales sacri et ex profanis praecipui ab orbe condito ad eundem Christi passione redemptum*, ed. Augustinus Maria Negri, vol. 4 (Lucca, 1757), 437: “Quare necessarium videtur dicere, mulieres illas, quae [...] subsecutae fuerant Jesum de Galilaea, & in die Parasceves de sepulchro redeuntes paraverant aromata & unguenta, vel fuisse ab istis diversas; (fieri enim potest, ut aliquae ex ejusmodi mulieribus eodemmet, quo mortuus est Jesus, die unguenta comparaverint, aliae vero post transactum Sabbatum;) vel si fuerunt eaedem, ipsas postea advertisse, non satis esse, quae paraverant ante Sabbatum; & propterea, eo transacto, confestim alia emere, & parare festinasse, ut mane diluculo ire possent ad sepulchrum, & corpus Jesu pro devotione sua inungere.”

would rise from the dead, and therefore she did not see any point in looking for him among the dead.²⁰⁵

But not everybody was ready to agree with Tornielli's argument. The Lutheran theologian Michael Walther,²⁰⁶ for example, pointed out that Tornielli's explanation would ultimately discredit the women's own sense of judgment.²⁰⁷ Quoting one of the deacons of Lutheran faith, Johannes Bugenhagen, Walther points out that one possibility would be that the women who returned from the crucifixion on the Day of Preparation intended only to buy and prepare the spices, but actually put their plan into action one full day later, when the Sabbath was over, especially since Luke does not provide any time specification. According to Walther, "the brief period of time between the burial and sunset would in fact confirm such an assessment" because the women would have had "barely more than three hours" to perform these tasks.²⁰⁸ Most likely, however, "these women had bought spices and had already begun to prepare oil from them on the Day of Preparation before sunset and the beginning of the Sabbath, but due to the feast of the imminent Sabbath, they could not finish in that time frame and they completed [this task] when the Sabbath had ended after sunset."²⁰⁹ Walther finds additional linguistic evidence that would support such a scenario:

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 437: "Ubi notandum est quod in ejusmodi piis mulierum conventibus recensendis, sacri Evangelistae expresse quidem tradunt inter ipsas exstisset etiam beatissimam Christi Matrem quando in cruce pendebat Jesus: at vero quando ad corpus ejus in sepulchro inungendum ipsae ivisse describuntur, nulla prorsus Matris Jesu mentio facta reperitur. Ex quo evidenter datur intelligi, ipsam beatissimam Virginem numquam vel minimum titubasse in fide resurrectionis filii sui, & propterea non curasse ire cum aliis ad sepulchrum, ne cum eis visa esset quaerere viventem cum mortuis."

²⁰⁶ On Walther, see note 169 in chapter 2.

²⁰⁷ Walther, *Harmonia totius Sanctae Scripturae*, 410: "Sed vel hoc nomine sententia haec sit improbabilis, quod non levem incogitantiam mulierculis hisce tribuat."

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 410: "Bugenhagius statuit, *mulierculas die Parasceves nec emisse aromata, nec parasse ex illis unguenta, sed exacto demum Sabbatho post occasum solis id esse factum, ac descriptionem* Lucae cum Marco sic conciliat, ut verba postrema, *Sabbatho quieverunt secundum legem, existimet esse explicationem praecedentium: Lucas, inquit, indeterminate ac sine certa notatione temporis asserit, mulierculas a sepulchro die parasceves reversas aromata & unguenta parasse, ne vero existimetur, quod ipsa illa vespera ea pararint, ideo seipsum explicat, quod Sabbatho quieverint secundum legem.* Quam sententiam confirmat breve intervallum temporis inter sepulturam Christi & occasum Solis, cum quo illucescebat, ut Lucas loquitur, sive incipiebat Sabbathum, vix enim tres horae intercesserant."

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 411: "[...] non improbabiliter dicitur, mulierculis hasce ipso parasceves die ante Solis occasum & Sabbathi magni initium aromata comparasse & unguenta ex illis praeparare caepisse, quodque tunc temporis propter imminentis Sabbathi festivitatem perficere non poterant, exacto Sabbatho post Solis occasum absolvisse."

[...] The verb ἤγόρασσαν [they bought] in Mark must be translated as a pluperfect into *emerant* [they had bought], because in the Hebrew language, whose vulgar style the evangelists and apostles of the New Testament follow in many places, they express all forms of past tense in one. And so the sense would be as follows: early in the morning on the first day of the week, which is on the day after the great Sabbath, they went to the tomb of Christ, carrying the spices which they had evidently bought on the Day of Preparation, and they had prepared them after the Sabbath had ended; in this sense, the description of Luke agrees entirely with Mark's; just as Mark uses the term ἤγόρασσαν [bought], Luke uses the term ἤτοιμασσαν [prepared].²¹⁰

Walther was certainly not the only one to suggest this solution. Only a few years earlier, in 1613, Johannes Piscator (1546–1625),²¹¹ professor of theology at the Academia Nassauensis in Herborn, had pleaded for this translation of the Greek aorist, and in his celebrated *Annotationes in libros Evangeliorum* (1641), the famous Dutch polymath Hugo Grotius likewise suggested that the Greek ἤγόρασσαν [they bought] should be translated as a pluperfect. According to Grotius, it was wrong, as many believed, that the women bought and prepared the spices on the Sabbath, after the sun had gone down:

Since it is amply clear from Luke that the spices were bought by the women not on the Sabbath, but had already been bought on the Day of the Preparation, the term ἤγόρασσαν [they bought] in Mark must be translated as *habebant emta aromata* [they had the spices that they had purchased]. For much depends on when the women had left and that they had the spices with them, because it was the cause of them going out; but it is not important to know when they had bought these spices. Therefore, this instance is expressed in the ἀσπερτως [indefinite tense].²¹²

²¹⁰ Ibid., 411: “Verbum igitur ἤγόρασσαν apud Marcum reddendum est in forma plusquamperfecti, *emerant*, quia lingua Hebraea, cuius idiotismos Evangelistae & Apostoli in Nov. Test. passim sequuntur, omnes praeteritorum species sub una continentur. Atque sic esset sensus: Mulieres hasce vale mane una Sabbathorum, id est, die Sabbathum magnum proxime sequuta ad sepulchrum Christi abiisse portantes aromata, quae emerant, die scilicet Parasceves, & paraverant exacto Sabbatho, qua ratione Lucae & Marci descriptio optime congruit, ut enim Marcus utitur verbo ἤγόρασσαν, ita Lucas habet verbum ἤτοιμασσαν.”

²¹¹ On Piscator, see Erich Wennecker, “Johannes Piscator,” in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 7 (1994), 640–44; also Walter J. Ong, “Johannes Piscator: One Man or a Ramist Dichotomy?” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 8 (1954), 151–62.

²¹² Hugo Grotius, *Operae theologicae*, t. II, vol. I: *Annotationes in quatuor Evangelia* (London, 1679), 279–80: “Neque me dimovet quod apud Marcum est ἤγόρασσαν ἀρώματα [*emerant*]

Grotius's translation as *habebant emta aromata* thus renders the aorist into a condition rather than an action because it shifts the focus from the act of buying the spices to the circumstance of having the spices with them. Support for this solution came also from such excellent classical scholars such as Erasmus Schmid (1570–1637) of Wittenberg,²¹³ whose edition of Pindar²¹⁴ set the standard for one hundred fifty years before it was replaced by Heyne's. Schmid, too, stressed that the aorist needed to be translated as a pluperfect because the women had already bought the spices on the *dies τῆς παρασκευῆς*, the Day of Preparation, “after the crucifixion and the entombment” so that “they already had them readily at hand on Sunday” when they went to the grave.²¹⁵

Although both Grotius and Erasmus Schmid were undoubtedly skilled philologists, such qualifications did not necessarily impress a former student of the *Johanneum* and the *Gymnasium illustre*, who had been mentored by one of the finest Greek scholars of his day. To Reimarus, Grotius's attempt to reconcile Mark and Luke seemed somewhat desperate.²¹⁶ Most importantly, however, it was flawed from the start because it rested on false premises. How could Grotius claim that it was not important to say when the women bought the spices? On the contrary, it was less important to state the obvious and emphasize that they brought them along when they went to the tomb on Sunday morning, since that was the purpose of their visit to the tomb in the first place. It was absolutely essential, however, for a predominantly Jewish readership to know that the women were devout and observed Jewish law.

aromata], unde nonnulli putarunt hic agi de res gesta statim post occasum Solis Sabbati. Nam cum apud Lucam apertissime liqueat aromata ab his mulieribus non Sabbto sed die τῆς παρασκευῆς [Parasceves] comparata, ἡγόρασσαν illud apud Marcum interpretandum est, *habebant emta aromata*. Nam quando exiissent mulieres dici multum attinebat; habuisse eas secum aromata itidem, quia id causam exitios indicat; quando autem ea aromata comparassent nihil referebat sciri: quare id ἀρρέστως [*tempore indefinito*] expressum est.”

²¹³ Heinrich Klenz, “Erasmus Schmid,” in *ADB* 32 (1881), 27–28.

²¹⁴ Pindar, *Pindarou Periodos, hoc est, Pindari Lyricorum principis* [...] (Wittenberg, 1616); see Ralph Häfner, “Synoptik und Stilentwicklung. Die Pindar-Editionen von Zwingli / Ceporin, Erasmus Schmid und Alessandro Adimari,” in Mulsow and Helmut Zedelmaier, eds., *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, (Tübingen, 2001), 97–121.

²¹⁵ Erasmus Schmid, *Opus sacrum posthumum in quo continentur versio Novi Testamenti nova, ad Graecam veritatem emendata et notae ac animadersionem in idem* (Nuremberg, 1658), 474: “Reddidi Aoristum hunc Plusquamperfecto, *Emerant*, nudius tertius scilicet, die παρασκευῆς, finita Crucifixione & Sepultura Christi. Neque enim hoc die Solis primum mane emerunt, sed die Parasceves, eaq; per Sabbatum secum asservarunt, ut sequente die Solis statim in promptu haberent [...].”

²¹⁶ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 217: “Der vortreffliche Grotius sucht beides, so gut er kann, zusammen zu reimen, und erklärt den Aoristum ἡγόρασσαν, *habebant emta aromata*.”

This is also why Luke explicitly states that the women rested on the Sabbath according to the law, and the same holds true for Mark, who has the women buy the spices after the holy day.²¹⁷ According to Reimarus, this obvious contradiction cannot be solved by a grammatical somersault, by simply rendering an action into a condition or circumstance, because the Greek syntax of the passage teaches otherwise:

The grammatical and logical sequence requires an action in Mark and does not permit a condition. It is preceded by two genitives that indicate as a consequence an action, *διαγενομένου σαββάτου*, *once the Sabbath was over*. Then follows the action, *ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα*, *they bought spices*. Thereafter comes the purpose clause, *ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτὸν*, *so that they might come and anoint him*. This is just the same as where it says about the birth of Jesus—not to mention hundreds of other examples—*τοῦ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος, after the birth of Jesus, μάγοι παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, the magi came to Jerusalem, προσκυνήσαι αὐτῷ, to worship him.*²¹⁸

217 Ibid., 217: “[Grotius] meynt also die Schwierigkeit dadurch zu heben, daß er das ἠγόρασαν nicht von einem actu, sondern von einem statu, oder der Bereitschaft des Eingekauften will verstanden wissen. Er nimmt aber eine falsche Ursache zum Grunde, warum der Umstand der eingekauften Spezereyen erwehnt werde. Dem Leser, sagt er, war nicht nöthig zu wissen, wenn die Weiber Spezereyen, sondern, daß sie welche bey sich gehabt, wie sie darum ausgingen. Nein; gerade umgekehrt. Dies letztere war gantz unnöthig, und verstand sich ja von selbst. Denn wenn einer liest, die Weiber wären eigenes Weges wieder zum Grabe ausser Thor gekommen, um den Körper in Spezereyen einzwickeln, wer wird sie sich so albern vorstellen, daß sie in der Absicht hinausgegangen wären, und hätten doch keine Spezereyen eingekauft, oder sie zu Hause vergessen? Dagegen war für einen Jüdischen Schreiber und Leser die Zeit des Einkaufs zu bemerken; damit niemand von diesen frommen Weibern die Gedanken bekäme, sie hätten den Sabbath und das Fest durch Kauffen und Tragen entheiligt. Diesen Bewegungsgrund sieht man offenbar aus dem Luca, der seine Weiber die Spezereyen vor dem Sabbat bereiten läst, und ausdrücklich die Anmerkung dabey setzt: am Sabbath selbst aber waren sie ruhig nach dem Gesetz. Also will Marcus seine Weiber auch nicht für Sabbathschänderinnen angesehen wissen; und darum erinnert er, sie hätten die Spezerey nicht eher gekauft, als bis der Sabbath völlig vergangen gewesen. Aber eben daher wird der Widerspruch zwischen Marco und Luca desto sichtbarer.”

218 Ibid., 218: “Die grammatische und logische Verbindung erfordert eine actionem bey dem Marco, und leydet keinen statum. Es sind duo Genitivi consequentiam actionis denotantes, διαγενομένου σαββάτου, wie der Sabbath vergangen war. Dann folgt die actio, ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα, kaufsten sie Spezereyen. Dann folgt finis actionis, ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτὸν, auf daß sie kämen und salbeten ihn. So wie es (hundert andere Beispiele zu geschweigen) von Geburt Jesu heist: τοῦ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος, als Jesus geboren war, μάγοι

One can almost imagine Grotius and Schmid, confined to the benches of the *Gymnasium illustre*, eagerly taking notes, while Reimarus, their schoolmaster, is parsing the sentence in front of them on the blackboard. Countless students went through this routine and learned to parse sentences that were far more challenging. A skilled philologist such as Grotius should certainly have known that the genitive absolute most likely would precede an action or event and not another circumstance or condition.²¹⁹ To Reimarus, this meant not only that Grotius's explanation failed, but also that the contradiction between Mark and Luke could not be solved. Given such discrepancies, the events as such have to be called into question. Truly, a devastating judgment from the perspective of the biblical θεόπνευστοι.

If his philological knowledge proved instrumental for Reimarus's radical criticism throughout the *Apologie*, this criticism was firmly embedded in his profound knowledge of Jewish antiquities. Although such knowledge seems obvious in regard to his criticism of the Old Testament, it was no less indispensable in his attack on Christian doctrine. His expertise in Jewish antiquities was instrumental, for example, when he showed that Jesus had no intention to abolish Jewish law. One such instance is Reimarus's treatment of the Lord's Supper, which replaced the Jewish celebration of Passover. The book of Exodus records the divine origins of the Passover feast as follows:

Exodus 12:1–14

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן בְּאֶרְצֵי מִצְרָיִם
לְאֹמֶר: הַחְדֵשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶם רָאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים רָאשׁוֹן הוּא
לְכֶם לְחַדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה: דְּבָרוּ אֶל-כָּל עֵדָת יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְאָמֶר בְּעֵשֶׂר לְחַדְשֵׁשׁ הַזֶּה וְיַקְהוּ לְכֶם אֵישׁ שָׁה
לְבִתְּר-אֶבֶת שָׁה לְבִתְּר: וְאַם-יִמְעַט הַבַּיִת מִקְהָת
מֹשֶׁה וְלִקְחַת הוּא וְשִׁבְנוּ הַקְרָבָה אֶל-בֵּיתוּ בְּמִכְסָת
נְפָשָׁת אִישׁ לְפִי אֶכְלָלוּ תַּבְסֹו עַל-הַשָּׁה: שָׁה תְּמִימָה
זָרֶבֶן-שָׁנָה יְהִי לְכֶם מִן-הַכְּבָשִׁים וּמִן-הַעֲזִים
תְּקֻחוּ: וְהִיא לְכֶם לְמִשְׁמְרַת עַד אַרְבָּעָה עַשְׂרֵה יוֹם
לְחַדְשֵׁשׁ הַזֶּה וְשִׁיחְטוּ אֹתוֹ כִּיּוֹלְדָה-יְשָׁאֵל בֵּין

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb

παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, kamen die Weisen nach Jerusalem- προσκυνήσαι αὐτῷ, ihn anzubeten."

²¹⁹ Ibid., 219: "Aber kein Grieche, kein Schreiber des N.T. wird post duos Genitivos consequentiam designantes einen statum setzen, der schon vor den duobus genitivis war, und das antecedens seyn sollte. Was er darnach setzt, wird allemal eine actio oder ein eventus seyn, der auf das genannte antecedens erfolgt ist."

Exodus 12:1–14

הַעֲרָבִים: וְלֹא תֹהֶם מִן-הַקְרֵם וְנִתְנֶנוּ עַל-שְׁתִי הַמִּזְוֹהֶת
 וְעַל-הַמְּשֻׁקּוֹף עַל הַבְּתִים אֲשֶׁר-יַאֲכִלוּ אֶת-זֶה
 וְאֲכִלוּ אֶת-הַבָּשָׂר בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה צָלִיל-אֲשֶׁר
 עַל-מָרְדִּים יַאֲכִלוּ: אֶל-הַאֲכָלָוּ מִפְנֵנוּ נָא וּבְשֶׁל
 מִבְּשֶׁל בְּמִים כִּי אִם-צָלִיל-אֲשֶׁר רָאשׁוּ עַל-כְּרָעִים
 וְעַל-קְרָבָו: וְלֹא-תַחֲטִירוּ מִפְנֵנוּ עַד-בָּקָר וְהַנְּתָר
 מִפְנֵנוּ עַד-בָּקָר בְּאַשׁ תִּשְׁרֹפוּ: וּכְהַ תִּאֲכִלוּ אֶת-זֶה
 מִתְנִיקִים חֲגִירִים יְנַלְּיכֶם בְּרִגְלֵיכֶם וּמִקְלֵיכֶם בִּידֵיכֶם
 אֲכִלָּתְךָם אֶת-זֶה בְּחִפּוֹן פֶּסַח הוּא לִיהוָה: וּעֲבָרְתִּי
 בְּאָרֶץ-מִצְרָיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה וְהַפִּיתִי כָּל-קָבָר בְּאָרֶץ
 מִצְרָיִם מִאָדָם וְעַד-בָּהָמָה וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהִים מִצְרָיִם
 אֲנִישָׁה שְׁפֵטִים אֲנִי יְהוָה: וְהִנֵּה הַקְרֵם לְכָם לֹא תֹאכַל
 הַבְּתִים אֲשֶׁר אַתָּם שְׁם וְאַתְּ אֶת-הַקְרֵם וְפִסְחָתִי
 עַלְכֶם וְלֹא-יָרַח בְּכֶם נִגְרֵף לְמִשְׁחִיתָה בְּהַלְּבָדִי בְּאָרֶץ
 מִצְרָיִם: וְהִנֵּה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְכָם לְזִכְרוֹן וְחִזְכָּתָם אֶת-זֶה
 כֹּג לִיהוָה לְזִרְחִיכֶם חֲקַת עֲזָלָם תְּחַנְּנוּ:

shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with Unleavened Bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be the day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

Accordingly, it served as a commemoration of the Israelites' deliverance from the yoke of slavery and their successful departure from the land of Egypt. Countless philologists and Hebraists wrote treatises on virtually every aspect of the Passover, ranging from the etymology of the term פֶּסַח to the exact details of how the ancient Jewish ritual was performed and how it was replaced by Christ's institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist.²²⁰

Samuel Bochart, for instance, pointed out that the term *pascha* was Aramaic in its origin, as Philo had already correctly noted, and it should best be rendered into the Greek ὑπερβασία [transgression] or διαβατήρια [offerings before crossing the border], as both Philo and Josephus had suggested.²²¹ More specifically, however, it was a reference to God's passing through the land of Egypt, sparing Jewish infants, but killing Egyptian firstborns. This is also why early modern scholars such as Conrad Melius pointed out that the term *pascha* derived from the Hebrew פֶּסַח [pass over] rather than from the Greek πάσχειν [endure, suffer], because it was "a symbol of the passing of the wrath, that is to say, of the passing of the murderous angel, and thus the passing from death into life, because the angel killed the Egyptians, but spared the Israelites."²²² Johannes Saubert the Younger (1638–1688), professor of theology at the University of Altdorf, pointed out that the mistaken belief that the term could be derived from the Greek πάσχειν was based upon the poor Hebrew knowledge of church fathers such as Tertullian, Lactantius, Ambrose, and others.²²³

²²⁰ See Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria*, 430–33 and 564–73.

²²¹ Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, 555: "Paschae nomen est Chaldaicum, ut recte notat Philo libro tertio *De vita Mosis*. Sed Hebraeis idem est פֶּסַח Pesach (veteribus *Phase*, & *Phasec*). Radix פֶּסַח pasach, est διαβαίνειν transgredi, vel ὑπερβαίνειν praetergredi. Josephus ὑπερβασία redit, & Philo διαβατήρια. Ita etiam *Origines* libro octavo *Contra Celsum*."

²²² Conrad Melius, *Antiquarius sacrer* (Frankfurt, 1719), 224: "Inter celebriora Judaeorum festa, erat festum *Paschatis*, quod nomen habet non a Graeco Πάσχω patior, sed ab Hebreo פֶּסַח quod *transitum* notat; erat enim symbolum *Transitus irae*, scilicet Angeli interactoris, adeoque *transitus a morte in vitam*; nam Angelus Aegyptios interficiens, Israelitis parcebat [...]."

²²³ Johannes Saubert, פֶּסַח גָּמָן *Festum Paschatis a Christo salvatore ante passionem celebratum* [...], in Saubert, *Palaestra theologico-philologico, sive disquisitionem academicarum* (Altdorf, 1678), 71: "Quod dum a Πάσχειν Graecorum deducunt, altam Ebreae linguae ignorantiam produnt multi patrum veteris Ecclesiae, Tertullianus, Lactantius, Ambrosius & alii."

The exact date of this yearly celebration was, according to Leviticus 23:5–6,²²⁴ the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish calendar, or 14 Nissan,²²⁵ and it was followed by the Festival of Unleavened Bread on the following day. According to Saubert, this corresponds approximately to the months March and April.²²⁶ Adriaan Reland in his *Antiquitates sacrae veterum hebraeorum* described the process of the celebration in great detail. Accordingly, the eating of the unleavened bread started on 15 Nissan, when it was consumed together with the Passover lamb that had already been slaughtered by the priest in the temple court on 14 Nissan. Josephus claims that the slaughtering occurred ἀπὸ ἐνάτης ὥρας μέχρις ἐνδεκάτης [from the ninth to the eleventh hour]²²⁷ and lasted for seven days.²²⁸ Relying partly on Philo, but more heavily on the gospel account,²²⁹ which suggests that Jesus celebrated Passover on the first day of Unleavened Bread, Reland claims that the celebration was also called “ἔορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων [Feast of Unleavened Bread] or Ἀζυμοφαγιῶν [Eating of Unleavened Bread], τιοτζעַה גַּת in Hebrew.”²³⁰ But

²²⁴ Lev. 23:5–6: “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a Passover offering to the Lord, and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you shall eat Unleavened Bread.”

²²⁵ See, for example, Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, 557: “Paschae tempus cum alibi notatur, tum maxime Levit. 23. v. 5. *Primo mense, die mensis decima quarta, inter duas vespertas erit Pascha Domino.* Ibi nempe tria notantur, mensis, dies, & pars diei, qua *Pascha* celebratur. *Mensis primus* hic appellatur, qui alibi mensis בָּבֶן *Abib*, seu נִסָּן *Nisan*, a quo veris initium. Is enim partim Martio, partim Aprili nostro respondet.”

²²⁶ Saubert, *Festum Paschatis*, 74–75: “Mensem festo huic assignatum novimus minime quidem Aprilem, ut perperam tradit Samuel Petitus, sed Nisan sive Asis: qui ex parte Martio nostro respondet, ex parte Aprili.”

²²⁷ Flavius Josephus, *Opera omnia*, ed. Siegeber Haverkamp, t. 2, *De Bello Judaico* (Amsterdam, 1726), 399.

²²⁸ Adriaan Reland, *Antiquitates Sacrae Veterum Hebraeorum* (Utrecht, 1717), 455: “Hoc nomen autem convenit huic festo, quod per septem dies panibus fermentatis vesci deberent, a die 14 Nisan usque ad 21. *Exod.* 12: 8. *Num.* 28:17. sic ut dies 15 Nisan fuerit primus azymorum, in cuius nocte agnum paschalem & panes azymos comedenterunt.”

²²⁹ Mark 14:12: “On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, ‘Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?’”; Luke 22:1: “Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near.”

²³⁰ Adriaan Reland, *Antiquitates Sacrae*, 454: “Pascha quoque ἔορτὴ τῶν ἀζύμων, vel Ἀζυμοφαγιῶν, τιοτζעַה גַּת *festum azymorum* dicitur, quia ei quasi immixtum est (συνάπτει τοῖς διαβατηρίοις ἔορτῃ, Ἀζυμα, uti Philo loquitur lib. de festis pag. 1190) & cum agno paschali panes azymos comedebant, *Luc.* 22:1. *Marc.* 14:12. quamvis nonnulli id distinguant [...].”

when Mark and Matthew call 14 Nissan the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Reland points out, this meant that the festivities and preparations had already begun on the evening preceding the actual feast day, even though 15 Nissan was still officially called the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.²³¹

This obviously then raised the question as to whether Christ celebrated the Passover on the same day as his fellow Jews. According to Samuel Bochart, Jesus must have celebrated the Passover meal on the stipulated evening of 14 Nissan and was executed on the feast day itself.²³² For Bochart, evidence comes from the fact that it was customary then to release a prisoner in honor of the festivities, which was the case with Barabbas.²³³ But that was exactly the main point of contention. Would the Jewish authorities really hold a trial and execute somebody on a feast day? Besides, John 18:28 clearly seems to suggest that the Jews had not yet eaten their Passover lamb.²³⁴ Scholars such as Joseph Scaliger concluded that Jesus must have celebrated Passover with his disciples one day earlier, on 13 Nissan, thus ultimately taking sides with the Greek Orthodox Church,²³⁵ which claimed the same. To Scaliger, it was not at all problematic that the Jews were only beginning to slaughter the lambs

²³¹ Ibid., 455–56: “Quum autem Matth. 26:17. & Marc. 14:12. ipse dies 14 Nisan appellatur primus dies azymorum, intelligendum id est secundum canonem Judaeorum mox traditum, videlicet in sacris comedendis diem praecedere noctem; sic ut tempus vespertinum diei 14 & nox subsequens hoc modo diei accenseantur. Vel dies 14 appellatur πρώτη τῶν ἀζύμων, id est, πρωτέρα, dies videlicet antecedens τὰ ἀζύμα [...] . Nam ceteroquin certum est diem 15 Nisan primum azymorum a Judaeis appellari.”

²³² Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, 560–61: “*Judei* enim *Pascha* celebrabant in fine diei decimi quarti, aut jam ineunte decimo quinto, qui primus erat *azymorum*. *Christus* autem eo ipso die cum *Apostolis* ultimum *Pascha* celebravit. Itaque *Matth.* 26. vers. 17. *Marc.* 14. v. 12. & *Luc.* 22. v. 7. *Pascha* illud parari, celebrari legitur prima die *azymorum*. Et fuisse id *Paschatis* apud *Judeos* celebrandi solemne tempus docent ista *Marci*, Καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν ἀζύμων, ὅτε τὸ Πάσχα ἔθνον, *Prima azymorum die, qua Pascha immolabunt*, nempe *Judei* [...]. Et die sequens, quo *Christus* traditus, & crucifixus est, festus fuit.

²³³ Ibid., 561: “Proinde Bar-abbas liberatus est, quia festo illo solebat reus aliquis liber dimitti.”

²³⁴ John 18:28: “Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover.”

²³⁵ See, for example, Pierre Jurieu, *Histoire Critique des Dogmes et des Cultes* (Amsterdam, 1704), 329: “Ici on pourroit insérer la celebre question du jour auquel le Seigneur celebra sa Pâque: les Latins veulent qu'il l'ait célébrée avec les Juifs, & le même jour. Et les Grecs veulent qu'il l'ait célébrée un jour devant: Ce qui fait le fondement de la difference de la pratique des Grecs & des Latins [...] .”

when Christ assembled his disciples around the table because only Jesus himself instituted the true and genuine Passover.²³⁶

But if the time was different, does this mean that Christ changed the ritual itself as well? Most works on Jewish antiquities from the period devote considerable space to reconstructing the actual Passover ritual. Among the more influential attempts was that by the seventeenth-century English Hebraist John Lightfoot (1602–1675), who based much of his information on his thorough and meticulous study of Talmudic and rabbinic sources. According to Lightfoot, there had to be a large enough group of people that was capable of consuming a whole Passover lamb.²³⁷ After the ritual slaughter was performed in the Temple court by the priest on the evening of 14 Nissan, the carcass was brought back to the house of the host, where it was roasted on a pomegranate spit.²³⁸ During the meal, people were not sitting around a table but were reclining, as was customary in ancient times.²³⁹ Aside from the lamb, the meal had several other components, among which wine and unleavened bread were

²³⁶ Joseph Scaliger, *Opus de emendatione temporum* (Geneva, 1629), 567: “Cum igitur Christus passus sit quartadecima Nisan, & vespera tertiae decimae Nisan civilis Pascha cum discipulis suis celebrarit, necessario Dominus Pascha anticipavit. Neque enim aliter potest esse, quamvis olim aliter senserimus, sed perperam. Atqui errabamus cum multis milibus hominum, qui Christum eadem hora, qua Iudeaos, Pascha celebrasse volunt. quod nullo modo probare possunt. Ipse Christus, qui erat verum Pascha, potuit tempore suo illum ritum cum ipso effectu repraesentare, cum Iudei agnum sine effectu tunc primum immolare caeperunt.” On Scaliger’s role in this endeavor, see Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, 271–75. For a more comprehensive treatment, see Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford and New York, 1983–93).

²³⁷ John Lightfoot, *Ministerium templi quale erat tempore nostri servatoris descriptum ex scriptura & antiquissimis Judaeorum monumentis*, in idem, *Opera omnia*, ed. Johannes Leusden (Utrecht, 1699) vol. 1, 730–31: “Priusquam mactarent Agnum Paschalem, constituebant numerum eorum, qui eum una comesuri essent: nam **אֵין שׁוֹחָטִין אֶת הַפֵּשָׁח אֶלָּא לְמַנוּזָּה**, non mactabant Pascha nisi in numerum certum personarum.”

²³⁸ Jurieu, *Histoire*, 330: “Ils faisoient rôtir l’agneau de Pâque dans une broche de bois de grenadier.”

²³⁹ Lightfoot, *Ministerium templi*, 733–34: “Non comedebant Pascha nisi sedendo: **עַי שְׁבֵי־שְׁרָאֵל לֹא יָאֵל עַד שִׁסְבֵּן** [...]. Porro non sedebant tunc temporis, quemadmodum mensae assidemus hodie, aut quemadmodum ipsi alias sedere solebant; sed peculiarem tum corporis statum observabant [...]. Vulgo mensae in lectis jacentes accumbebant, & in aliis quidem conviviis sedebant, ut nos sedemus erecto corpore; vel cum liberius convvari volebant & expeditiores esse, insidebant lectis, & cubito sinistro mensae imposito jacebant, atque hoc statu corporis, aut quovis alio indifferenter utebantur. Sed nocte Paschatis putabant se teneri coenare eo jacentium statu, cuius rei hanc rationem reddunt ipsi [...].”

the most important ones. Although each of the stipulated four cups of wine could be mixed with water, it had to be carefully measured and could not contain less than 1/16 of a ℥ of wine.²⁴⁰ When the wine was served, the patriarch or the head of the household blessed the wine with the words, “Blessed are you, Lord, who created the fruit of the vine.”²⁴¹ After the third chalice was emptied, Psalms 113–118 were recited as the הַלְלָה [praise], the *magnum Hallel*.²⁴² The other components of the meal were bitter herbs, namely חֹרֶת [horseradish], עֲלִישׁן [endive], תְּמִכָּא [chicory], הַרְחֵבִינה [beet], and מַרְוָר [horehound] as a side dish,²⁴³ and the חָרְסָתָה, a condiment of fruits in the shape of a brick as a reminder of the hardship suffered in Egypt.²⁴⁴

Reimarus was well informed about these details. He had often taught a class on the *Antiquitates sacrae veterum hebraeorum*, using Conrad Iken’s and Adriaan Reland’s works on the subject. In fact, his lecture notes confirm that he was providing his students with the same kind of information:

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- 240 Ibid., 734–35: “Inter varios cibos, qui una comedebantur cum Agno Paschali, de quibus suo ordine loquemur, praecipui erant *panis & vinum* [...]. In hisce quatuor vini calicibus sedulo observabant certam quandam mensuram & mixturam. *Proportio vini non poterat minor esse* [...] decima sexta parte Hini, praeter aliquantulum aquae quod misceretur [...]”.
- 241 Ibid., 735: “Cum ad eos ferretur primus quatuor calicum, postquam discubuisserunt, unus ex societate (Paterfamilias, si unica esset familia; vel si plures essent, ideoneus aliquis eam in rem electus, quem vocabant קורא הגדה, *Recitatem Haggadae*, vel verborum Paschalium) gratias agebat supra vinum, & id exhauciebat [...]. Sed quodcumque prius esset [...] ita erat concepta gratiarum actio de vino: *Benedictus esto tu, o Domine, qui creasti fructum vitis* [...]”.
- 242 See Saubert, *Festum Paschatis Salvatore*, 85–86: “Hymnus ille decantatus fuit inter Judaeos initio mensis, in festo dedicationis & tribus majoribus. Et in festo quidem Paschatis in duas partes dividebatur; quarum prior dicta ante accubitum cibique sumptionem, posterior post epotum poculum quartum: Illa continebat Psalmum cxiii, cxiv, haec cxv, cxvi, cxvii, cxviii. Ex his junctim magnus ille hymnus conflatus erat [...]. Interim & hoc notari potest, Thalmudicos doctores in definiendo hymno hoc non convenire, quorum verba ex Mass. Psachim h.l. inserere non pigabor: תנו רבבי גומר עלי את ההלל ואומר הילל הגדול דברי ר טרפון [...]”.
- 243 Lightfoot, *Ministerium templi*, 736: “Herbae quibus utebantur, erant quinque generum: חזרת, lactucae; עליישן, *intyba*; תמכא, *cichoreum*; בטה, *beta*; מרור, *marrubia*, aliquae similes, quarum quaedam oxybapho aptae, aliae amarae.”
- 244 Ibid., 737: “Habebant etiam patinam, cuius crassum erat condimentum, quam vocabant חָרְסָתָה, *Charoseth*, plenam dulcibus & amaris cibis, ut *dactylis*, *ficubus*, *uvis*, *aceto*, &c. in memoriam argillae, quae eorum Patres in *Aegypto* occupaverat.”

The Passover meal then consisted of (1) four servings of wine (2) unleavened bread (3) the Passover lamb itself (4) bitter herbs with vinegar (as a salad), which were, as Bochart explains through a conjecture in part 1 on page 603 f. of his *Hierozoicon* and Buxtorf in his *Lexicon Talmudicum*, שׁל^ו [chicory] and תִמְךָ [sic.] [bitter herbs] and [Buxtorf explains this also] in his *Dissertatio VI: De coena Dominica*²⁴⁵ (5) dough and the flesh of fruits that had been prepared from figs, nuts, citrus fruit, and almonds cooked with wine, and that was shaped like a brick, and it was sprinkled with spices, which looked like straw, so that the ancient slave labors are called into memory [...].²⁴⁶

Christian theologians, however, suggested that the significance of this tradition ceased with Christ's Last Supper, when Jesus apparently feasted only on bread and wine. Early church fathers—Jerome and Origen—had stressed that with the breaking of the bread and the passing of the cup of wine, Jesus had abolished the Jewish Passover and instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist.²⁴⁷ Ever since, this belief has been maintained by Catholics and Protestants alike. During the seventeenth century, Buxtorf in his treatise *In historiam institutionis ss. coenae Dominicæ* (1662) pointed out that

[the old Passover had to be abandoned], because it was the last Passover that Christ wanted to celebrate on this earth according to the [Jewish] law and because what followed was according to the law and in a typical

²⁴⁵ Johannes Buxtorf, *In historiam institutionis ss. coenae Dominicæ, in qua praecipue de primæ coenæ ritibus & forma*, in Buxtorf, *Dissertationes philologico-theologicae* (Basel, 1662).

²⁴⁶ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Scholia ad Conr. Ikenii Antiquitates Hebraicas*, UB Rostock, Ms. orient. 71, 4°, 134: “Coena paschatis igitur constabat (1) poculis vini quatuor. (2) pani bus atzymis (3) ipso agno paschali. (4) oleribus amaris, apposito aceto (Salat) quae qualia fuerint, ex coniectura explicat Bochart. Hieroz. P. 1. p. 603 gf. et Buxtorff. in Lex. Talmud. שׁל^ו et תִמְךָ et diss vi. de coena Domi. §. 14. (5) Massa et pulpa in formam lateris, quae dicitur ex ficibus, nucibus, malis citreis, amygdalisque vino coctis, praeparata fuisse, et aromatibus, quae speciem paleae praeberent conspersa, ut veteres operae serviles hoc pacto in memoriam revocarentur.”

²⁴⁷ See Jerome, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Vallarsi and Maffaei, t. 7, *Commentaria in Evangelium S. Matthæi* (Paris, 1845), 195: “Postquam typicum Pascha fuerat impletum, et agni carnes cum apostolis comedederat, assumit panem, qui confortat cor hominis, et ad verum Paschæ transgreditur sacramentum, ut quomodo in præfiguratione ejus Melchisedech, summi Dei sacerdos, panem et vinum offerens fecerat (Genes. xiv), ipse quoque in veritate sui corporis et sanguinis repraesentaret.”

sense predetermined by his death, through the slaughtering of the lamb [...]. Christ wanted to put in place of the Passover meal this new sacrament.²⁴⁸

According to Buxtorf, Christ was in two ways both the source and the creator of this sacred meal. On the one hand, he set an example for his disciples and for the future ministers of the Church by his own celebration of the meal. On the other hand, he instituted it by the mandate "Do this in remembrance of me."²⁴⁹ Both Christ's example and his mandate were accordingly placed upon the ministers of the Church, who ever since have performed the rites of this new sacrament in his memory.²⁵⁰ Most importantly, however, orthodox theologians such as Johann Biermann (1675–1721) of Herborn were eager to stress the typological significance of the entire ritual. According to Biermann, the Passover celebration completely foreshadowed Christ's passion. The lamb as a choice of the sacrifice was the most sweet-tempered of all animals, which completely corresponded to the nature of Christ, the messiah.²⁵¹ Just as Christ was without

²⁴⁸ See Buxtorf, *In historiam institutionis ss. coenae Dominicae*, 286: "Quia enim hoc ultimum erat Pascha, quod Christus in his terris secundum Legem celebraturus erat, illudque in posterum, tanquam legale & typicum, morte Christi, per Agnum ejusque mactationem, figurata, & jam-jam subsecutura, abrogandum erat; Christus Novum hoc Sacramentum in locum Paschatis substitutere voluit [...]."

²⁴⁹ Luke 22:19.

²⁵⁰ Buxtorf, *In historiam institutionis ss. coenae Dominicae*, 285: "Causa efficiens & Author seu Institutor, sacri hujus Convivii, est Dominus noster JESUS CHRISTUS, i ad Cor. 2.23.24. Matth. 26. v. 26. & c. XII. Dupliciter vero Christus Sacrae Coenae est author; primo Exemplo; dum primus. Idem fuit ejus Administer, & Apostolis suis, aliquis Ecclesiae Ministris deinceps futuris; actionibus suis exemplo praeavit, quod imitarentur in dispensatione ejus. Christi enim actio hic nostra est institutio; plane ut Joh. 13.15. ait: *Exemplum dedi vobis, ut prout ego feci, sic faciatis & vos:* Secundo, *Verbo & Mandato*, dum ait, *Hoc facite*, Luc. 22.19. *Hoc*, scil. quod ego nunc feci, vobiscum accumbendo, Panem accipiendo, benedicendo, frangendo, inter vos distribuendo: Poculum itidem, & c. *Facite*, scil. posthac & vos: idque i. quatenus legitimi a me constituti Apostoli, Praecones & Ministri Evangelii, actiones illas sacras, quas a me nunc vidistis, iisdem ritibus obeundo, & administrando; Vos, inquam, & quicunq; in hoc officio, legitimi vestri successores erunt."

²⁵¹ Johann Biermann, *Moses und Christus: oder Erklärung der vornehmsten Fürbilder des Alten Testaments* (Frankfurt, 1714), 642–43: "Da ist eine sehr artige Übereinkunft und angenehme Gleichheit/ zwischen einem Lamm insgemein/ und unserm Herrn Jesu Christo [...]. Ein Lamm ist das sanftmüthigste/ unschuldigste und geduldigste unter allen Thieren/ das sich leiten/ scheren/ ja ohne einigen Widerstand tödten/ und das noch darzu nach seinem Tod mit seiner Wolle seinen Schlachter kleidet. Wann ehemals Fabius Maximus

any sin, the lamb had to be immaculate and unblemished.²⁵² When the lamb was roasted, it was pierced with wooden spit, just as Christ was pierced with a lance,²⁵³ and just as the roast was eaten by a whole family, parishioners partake in the body of Christ during communion.²⁵⁴

The Reimarus of the *Apologie* had no time for any typological musings. His analysis, however, betrays complete familiarity with the scholarly debates and the issues at stake. Based on this knowledge, Reimarus had little problem exposing what he believed were major contradictions that rendered the entire narrative unreliable. If Jesus celebrated Passover in accordance with Jewish law, then he would have eaten his Last Supper on 14 Nissan. It was simply not possible then to pick a random time because the slaughter had to be performed by the priest at the Temple, who would have turned people away.²⁵⁵ This, however, would mean that Jesus had to be executed on the feast day itself, 15 Nissan. “How could such a solemn holy day,” Reimarus asks, “be spent with the tumultuous trial of Jesus in front of the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, and Pilate, let alone with the execution itself and the burial?”²⁵⁶ According to Reimarus, this confusion has led many to believe that Jesus did not even celebrate Passover, but simply made it a commemorative dinner in honor of the impending feast. But the disciples’ inquiry about where they should prepare

wegen der Sanfftmuth seiner Sitten ein Schäfflein genennet wurde/ wie vielmehr verdi-
enet nicht der Messias also genennet zu werden? dann er ist sanfftmüthig [...].”

²⁵² Ibid., 643: “Das Lamm muste vollkommen und ohne einigen Mangel seyn: Also ist unser Jesus das unschuldige und unbefleckte Lamm.”

²⁵³ Ibid., 646: “Das Lamm ward mit einem höltzernen Spieß durchstochen/ und also mitten in einem Ofen/ der darzu bereitet war/ in einer Gestalt/ die einem Creutz gleich ist/ auf-
gehencckt/ wie so Justinus Martyr in seiner Unterredung mit Trypho dem Juden schreibet:
Christus ward auch an das verfluchte Galgen-Hotz auffgehencckt/ mit einem Speer durch-
stochen [...].”

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 649: “Das Lamm ward in einem Hauß gegessen/ und dorffte nichts von dem Fleisch ausser das Hauß getragen werden: Also wird das Fleisch des gecreutzigten Christi allein in seiner Kirche gegessen/ ausser welcher Christus nicht gesucht noch gefunden werden kan [...].”

²⁵⁵ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 114: “Denn das jährige Fest war an den 14^{ten} Tag des Monats Nisan gebunden, als an welchem sie aus Egypten gegangen waren; folglich muste ein Jude wie der andere an diesem einen Tag sein Osterlam schlachten lassen, und es war nicht möglich, daß der eine heut, der andere morgen schlachtete.”

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 114: “Wie kann man aber gedenken, daß ein so feyerlicher heiliger Tag mit dem tumultarischen Verhör Jesu, bey den Hohenpriestern Hannas und Caiphas, und bey Pilatus, ja mit der Hinrichtung selbst und mit dem Begräbniß zugebracht sey?”

Passover refutes such claims.²⁵⁷ A careful look at the events described in the gospels also reveals that Jesus was a perfectly obedient Jew who was closely following the ritual of the celebration, not replacing it with a new sacrament. In fact, when Jesus said that he would “never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when [he would] drink it anew with [his disciples] in [his] Father’s kingdom,”²⁵⁸ the implication was that the Passover rituals would continue to be observed in Christ’s new kingdom.²⁵⁹ Everything suggests, then, that Jesus celebrated the Jewish Passover in accordance with the stipulated laws. As a group of thirteen, Jesus and the apostles were enough people to eat a whole roasted lamb. The lamb was slaughtered in the Temple and later roasted at the house that the group had selected. Jesus, representing the head of the household, blessed the unleavened bread and distributed it, and he blessed the chalice and passed it around. The entire meal was then concluded with the song of praise from the Psalms.²⁶⁰ To Reimarus, this all suggests that “Jesus’ Last Supper was not a separate meal in itself, with only bread and wine, but it was an Easter [Passover] celebration, whose main course was a lamb roast with a salad and vegetables [...].”²⁶¹ According to Reimarus, when the meal

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 115: “Durch diese und dergleichen Gründe sind viele bewogen worden zu glauben, Jesus habe gar keine Oster-Maalzeit gehalten; oder es sey nur eine Gedächtniß-Maalzeit auf dies Fest gewesen; welches jedoch dem klaren Buchstaben verschiedener Örter widerspricht. Denn die Jünger verlangen seinen Befehl, wo sie das Passa d.i. das Osterlam, bereiten sollten. Er selbst bezeugt bey der Maalzeit, er habe groß verlangen gehabt dies Passa noch vor seinem Leyden zu essen.”

²⁵⁸ Matthew 26:29.

²⁵⁹ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 2, 101: “Denn Jesus sagt: *Ich werde von nun an nicht mehr von diesem Gewächs des Weinstocks trinken, bis an den Tag da ichs neu trinken werde mit euch in meines Vaters Reich.* Das verstehet ich so: die Oster-Maalzeit, und also das Fest und Fest-Opfer solle noch fortdauren und gehalten werden, wenn er, als der Messias, das Himmelreich, oder das Reich seines Vaters anfangen, und zu dem Ende wiederkommen würde.”

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 110: “Er machte mit seinen zwölf Aposteln eine zulängliche Gesellschaft aus, die das Osterlam gäntzlich verzehren konnte. Sie bereiten für ihn das Osterlam, oder die Ostermaalzeit, d.i. sie, oder einer im Namen aller, ließ das Lam, wie gebräuchlich, im Tempel schlachten, und hernach in dem bestimmten Hause als einen Braten, mit dem was dazu gehörte, anrichten. Jesus, als der Vornehmste, segnete und brach das Brodt, segnete und reichte den Kelch. Er tunkte sein Stücklein Brod mit Juda zugleich in das Gemüse: es ward nach der Maalzeit der Dankbecher (*Kos habberachah, ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας*) getrunken: und mit dem Lobgesange aus gedachten Psalmen die Maalzeit beschlossen.”

²⁶¹ Ibid., 110: “Dies Abendmaal also, was Jesus hielte und einsetzte, war keine abgesondert Maalzeit für sich, von bloßem Brodt und Wein, sondern eine Oster-Maalzeit, deren Hauptgerichte ein Lams-Braten mit Salat und Gemüse war [...]”

was instituted in commemoration of Egyptian hardship, wine was in fact not even part of the ritual, because “there was hardly any wine in Egypt, let alone in the desert, because the customary beverage was either water or beer.” The wine became part of the ritual only later, when the Israelites were already in Canaan, and they most likely used red wine as a symbol of the blood that had been spilled during captivity in Egypt.²⁶² Only later did early Christians introduce changes. The meal was made into a daily ritual that excluded the lamb roast and the other dishes with the exception of the bread and the wine.²⁶³ Jesus, in fact, had never commanded his disciples to change this ritual and to serve only bread and wine.²⁶⁴ Contrary to Jesus’ own intention, however, the celebration was turned into a mourning ritual in which the bread became a thin little piece of flour that “dissolves in one’s mouth just like nothing and a few drops of wine that barely wet the palate, unless the officiating priest drinks it all by himself.”²⁶⁵ But what is even worse, the words “this is my body, this is my blood,” which originated in blessing the unleavened bread, became the subject of dispute and aggression through the entire history of Christianity:

Since these words have been taken literally, all of Christendom has become embroiled in the most violent disputes, hostile divisions, and gory wars about the correct interpretation of such words that have now lost any of their sound meaning: mysteries are constructed whereby intellect and common sense are left out and incredible discrepancies are

262 Ibid., 111: “Den Wein hatte Moses nicht bestimmt, weil es in Egypten nicht viel Wein gab, noch weniger in der Wüsten, sondern das Getränk Wasser oder Bier war. Aber der Besitz des Landes Canaan hatte den Wein bey dieser Maalzeit eingeführt, und es ist höchst wahrscheinlich, daß man rohten Wein dazu genommen habe, nämlich als ein sinnlicher Bild des vergossenen Blutes der Israeliten, oder, so man will, des Lammes, womit sie ihre Thür-Pfosten bezeichnet hatten, daß der Würg-Engel vorüber gegangen war.”

263 Ibid., 113: “Schon die erste Kirche hat die Feyerlichkeit, wie es scheint, öfters wiederholt, und mit allen ihren Liebes-Maalen oder Agapis verbunden; da doch Jesus nur einmal gestorben war, und die Erinnerung seines Todes an seine letzte Maalzeit des Osterfestes angehängt hatte. Das Brod und der Wein war nur eine Nebensache bey der Maalzeit. Jetzt macht man eine besondere Maalzeit aus dem Brodt und Wein, und lässt die Hauptgerichte weg.”

264 Ibid., 112: “Hat Jesus gesagt, sie sollten künftig , ohne Osterlam, bey bloßem Brodt und Wein, und zu jeder Zeit sich seines Todes erinnern? Nein, die Erinnerung des Todes berühmter Personen ist an ihrem Sterbe-Tage, und folglich diese an der Ostermaalzeit, an diesem Brodt und diesem Wein gebunden.”

265 Ibid., 113: “Damals war es ein Brodt zur Nahrung, ein öfterer Trunk zur Erquickung. Nun ist es an den meisten Orten ein dünnes Blättchen von Mehl das wie Nichts im Munde verschwindet, und ein Tröpfchen Weins, der die Gurgel kaum naß macht; wo nicht der Meß-Pfaffe den Wein gar für sich allein austrinket.”

ignored; people are tormented and scared to death about this mysterious meal, not to mention the superstitious adoration of the host and other abuses of it.²⁶⁶

These words return us to the initial exchange between Querini and Reimarus, where the latter seemed hesitant to participate in any ecumenical discussion, expressing his aversion to the religious strife and disputes within Christianity. His profound philological knowledge and familiarity with Jewish antiquities had made Reimarus aware of the historical roots of Christian doctrine and how it had evolved. Although the *Apologie* has barely any scholarly apparatus, a close reading reveals how much Reimarus is indeed indebted to his humanist training and to the legacy of Christian Hebraists. It is quite feasible, then, as has recently been pointed out, that Reimarus has produced a reduction.²⁶⁷ Bibliographical references and scholarly debates are completely submerged in a very readable German text, tailored not to a circle of elusive polyhistorians and biblical scholars, but to an educated public ready to become enlightened. In this regard, Reimarus is almost at the end point of the tradition of polyhistorians embodied by the work of his mentors Fabricius and Wolf, who had spent their entire lives on cataloguing and compiling the scholarship in these fields. Reimarus was able to harvest the fruits of these labors. Given his harsh treatment of revelation, it seems highly unlikely that Querini would have appreciated even a scholarly discussion of Reimarus's views. Keeping in mind how the world reacted to Lessing's release of fragments from the *Apologie*, we can see that Reimarus's choice to withhold his *Apologie* was certainly a wise one.

266 Ibid., 114: "So aber die Worte buchstäblich angenommen werden, verwickelt sich die Christenheit in die heftigsten Streitigkeiten, feindselige Spaltungen und blutige Kriege über den Verstand solcher Worte, die nun allen gesunden Verstand verloren haben: man macht Geheimnisse, dabey man Sinnen und Vernunft entsagen, und ungeheure Ungereimtheiten verschlucken muß: man quält und ängstigt die Menschen mit dieser mysteriösen Speise bis in den Tod; von der abergläubischen Anbetung der Hostien und andern Mißbräuchen derselben nicht einmal zu sagen."

267 Martin Mulsow, "From Antiquarianism to Bible Criticism? Young Reimarus Visits the Netherlands," *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Martin Mulsow (New York, 2011), 14.

The Miraculous Crossing of the Red Sea

*What Lessing and His Opponents during the Fragmentenstreit
Did Not See**

On 20 March 1777, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing wrote a letter to his brother Karl. Just a few months earlier, he had published additional installments from Reimarus's *Apologie* as the fourth contribution to his series *Zur Geschichte und Litteratur. Aus den Schätzen der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel* [On History and Literature: Treasures from the Ducal Library in Wolfenbüttel]. To his dismay, however, the initial response of orthodox theologians had been somewhat cautious.¹ Little did he know at the time that dark storm clouds were already gathering on the horizon, ready to unsettle his idyllic existence in Wolfenbüttel. Less than a year later, Lessing would not only mourn the death of his beloved wife Eva König (1736–1778),² but also his dispute with the Lutheran pastor Johann Melchior Goeze (1717–1786) would already be in full swing. For the time being, however, he seemed to have found some satisfaction in discussing the issues raised in the fragments with his brother Karl:

Your objections to my hypothesis of the crossing of the Israelites through the Red Sea are not irrefutable—even though Scripture states: “and Pharaoh and his army went across as well.” Excuse me? For obvious reasons, should it not say: Pharaoh and his army wanted to go across as well. They only wanted to pursue the Israelites, without knowing that they had

* An earlier version of this chapter has been published under the same title in *Lessings Religionsphilosophie im Kontext: Hamburger Fragmente und Wolfenbütteler Axiomata*. Edited by Christoph Bultmann and Friedrich Vollhardt. New York: De Gruyter, 2011: 181–99.

- 1 A few days later, Lessing wrote to his brother Karl: “Daß die Theologen zu den Fragmenten meines Ungekannten so schweigen, bestärkt mich in der guten Meinung, die ich jederzeit von ihnen gehabt habe. Mit der gehörigen Vorsicht kann man ihrentwegen schreiben, was man will. Nicht das, was man ihnen nimmt, sondern das was man an dessen Stelle setzen will, bringt sie auf, und das mit Recht. Denn wenn die Welt mit Unwahrheiten soll hingehalten werden, so sind die alten, bereits gangbaren, eben so gut dazu, als neue”; in Lessing, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 12: *Briefe* (Frankfurt, 1994), no. 1293, letter to his brother Karl, 25 May 1777, 79.
- 2 See Paul Raabe, *Eva König* (Hamburg, 2005), as well as Petra Oelker, *Ich küssé Sie tausendmal: das Leben der Eva Lessing* (Berlin, 2005); also very helpful is Günter and Ursula Schulz, eds., *Meine liebste Madam: Gotthold Ephraim Lessings Briefwechsel mit Eva König, 1770–1776* (Munich, 1979).

entered a dried-up branch of the Red Sea.—Your idea that God had elevated the bed of the Red Sea, which is approximately how Lilienthal³ also portrays it, only explains how the sea became dry land; but it does not explain how so many people were able to cross within such a short period of time. That is what is key here.⁴

As this passage indicates, Lessing is discussing here the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea,⁵ which had been the subject of the third fragment of the notorious Wolfenbüttel fragmentist.⁶ But Lessing's emphasis of the problem of a vast multitude of people crossing a large body of water within a short period of time provides only a glimpse of the overall complexity this episode posed to early modern scholars. In his *Apologie*, Reimarus had subjected the biblical account of the story to a devastating criticism, showing what he perceived as the impossibility of about three million Israelites accomplishing this feat unscathed within just one single night.⁷ In his analysis, as we have seen in chapter 3, Reimarus devoted considerable time and space to discussing the actual crossing, paying particular attention to the overall mass of people and livestock involved, the potential hazards of traveling across a still-slippery seabed, and both the duration of the event and the distance covered. Several scholars—Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791) was probably the most famous—

³ Theodor Christoph Lilienthal, *Die gute Sache in der heiligen Schrift alten und neuen Testaments enthaltenen Göttlichen Offenbarung, wider die Feinde derselben erwiesen und gerettet*, vol. 9 (Königsberg, 1760), 153: “Wir glauben Ursache zu haben anzunehmen, daß Gott durch ein Erdbeben den Grund des Meeres in die Höhe gehoben habe, auf welchem die Israeliten trocken hinüber gehen können. Es ist sonst nicht ungewöhnlich, daß Erdbeben in dem Grunde des Meeres ihre Wirkung beweisen: und man hat Exempel, daß dadurch gantze Insuln aufgeworfen worden [...]”.

⁴ Lessing, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 12: *Briefe*, no. 1257: Lessing to his brother Karl, 20 March 1777, 52: “Deine Einwürfe gegen meine Hypthese von dem Durchgange der Israeliten durch das rote Meer sind nicht unbeantwortlich.—Wenn es gleich in der Schrift heißt: ‘und Pharao und sein Heer gingen auch herüber,’ was denn? muß dieses nicht offenbar heißen: Pharao und sein Heer wollten auch herübergehen. Sie wollten den Israeliten nur folgen, ohne zu wissen, daß sie durch einen ausgetrockneten Arm des roten Meeres gegangen waren.—Deine Vorstellung, daß Gott das Bett des roten Meeres in die Höhe gehoben, welches ungefähr auch Lilienthals Vorstellung ist, erklärt auch nur, wie das Meer trocken geworden, nicht aber, wie so viele Menschen in so kurzer Zeit hinüber kommen können. Und das ist hier die Hauptsache.”

⁵ See Ex. 13:17–14:2; for a more in-depth discussion of the Re(e)d Sea episode in the *Apologie*, see chapter 3.

⁶ Lessing, *Werke*, vol. 8: *Werke 1774–1778* (Frankfurt, 1989), 236–46.

⁷ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, ed. Gerhard Alexander, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1972), vol. 1, 299–326.

have focused on this exercise in arithmetic, either applauding its wittiness⁸ or exposing its apparent flaws.⁹ This is, of course, not entirely unjustified. The logistics of the actual crossing and the multitude of people involved have undoubtedly always been major issues of dispute among early modern faith-fuls and their opponents, and remain, as becomes apparent in Lessing's letter to his brother, key components to either embrace the biblical account as historically accurate or to reject it as the vivid creation of an imaginative mind. Yet, much scholarship that surfaced in the course of the Fragment Controversy and beyond has almost exclusively spent its time with such mathematical equations, thereby failing to acknowledge not only the complexity of the episode itself, but also the depth of Reimarus's scholarship. In fact, although the third fragment selected by Lessing focuses almost entirely on the problem of the actual crossing, a closer look at the problems the Exodus episode posed for early modern scholars will reveal the philological intricacy of the tradition Reimarus was confronting. It will also become apparent that simply reading the fragments published by Lessing or the printed edition of the *Apologie* almost inevitably leads to an underestimation of the profundity and range of Reimarus's biblical criticism.

Throughout the early modern period, numerous theologians and scholars had racked their brains and tried to imagine, picture, portray, and describe how and where this remarkable event might have taken place. Not surprisingly, a map of the Red Sea and the potential route the children of Israel traveled was often included in any major work on the *geographica sacra*. Up to the seventeenth century, hardly any theologian or biblical scholar dared to even remotely question the miraculous nature of the event, let alone the historical veracity of the biblical account. It was the culmination of the Exodus narrative, where God manifested his power to his chosen people. More importantly, however, the Red Sea episode was viewed as a spiritual baptism that could be tied to Paul's words in his letter to the Corinthians.¹⁰ To Isidor Clarius (1495–1555), bishop of Foligno, for example, "the sea was a figure of baptismal water, the cloud a figure of the spirit, and the manna a figure of the bread of life,

8 Henning Graf Reventlow, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung*, vol. 6: *Von der Aufklärung bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2001), 160.

9 Johann Salomo Semler, *Anhang zur Beantwortung der Fragmente des Ungenannten* (Halle, 1779), 15–32; on Semler, see introduction, note 4.

10 1 Cor. 10:2 (NRSV): "I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ."

which was Christ.”¹¹ But typological interpretations were not just the exclusive specialty of Roman Catholic theologians like Clarius. The aforementioned Johann Biermann enthusiastically proclaimed that the event was a reference to the Church of the New Testament. Just as the Egyptian pharaoh and his chariots pursued the ancient Israelites, so was the early Church subject to persecution in its infancy. According to Biermann, Christ’s death on the wooden cross opened a path for his disciples, just as Moses parted the Red Sea with his staff and opened a path for his people.¹² The crossing itself foreshadowed, Biermann suggests, the sacrament of baptism. Accordingly,

the Israelites, when they passed under the cloud through the sea, were most likely sprinkled with drops of seawater from the cloud extending above them and the wall of water that was raised to the right and left of them, just as we are sprinkled with water at our own baptism.¹³

But although the *velamen Mosis*,¹⁴ as Flacius had referred to it, may have kept hidden the true and genuine meaning of the passage, it could not obscure

¹¹ See Clarius in *Critici sacri*, t. vii, pars ii (Amsterdam, 1698), 1085: “Mare ergo figura fuit aquae Baptismatis; nubes, Spiritus; manna, panis vitae, qui Christus est.”

¹² Johann Biermann, *Moses und Christus: oder Erklärung der vornehmsten Fürbilder des Alten Testaments* [...] (Frankfurt, 1714), 753: “Wie die Israeliten/ die kaum aus Egypten auffgebrochen und erlöst waren/ so bald wiederum von Pharao und seinen Reuthern verfolget wurden/ Exod. XIV, 4–7. So hat die Kirche des Neuen Testaments/ nachdem sie eben von der Dienstbarkeit der Sünde und des Gesetzes erlöst war/ den Verfolgung ihrer Feinde und ihrer fleischlichen Brüder wiederum müssen offen liegen/ Cant. I,6 [...]. Wie Moses mit seinem Wunder-Stab die Wasser theilte/ zum Heyl und Erlösung Israels/ und mit demselben die Wasser über die Egypter/ über ihre Wagen und Reuther wieder brachte: Also versammlet Christus mit dem Stab seines Worts seine Kinder/ und bahnnet ihnen durch das Holtz seines Creutzes/ einen frischen und lebendigen Weg nach dem Himmel [...].”

¹³ Ibid., 755: “Wie die Israeliten/ die durchs Meer und unter der Wolcke giengen/ aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach mit einigen Tropffnen/welche zum Theil aus dem Wasser des Meeres/das ihnen zur Rechten und zur Linken war/ und zum Theil aus der über ihnen ausgebreiteten Wolcken/ in die Höhe gezogen/ besprengt wurden/ also werden wir in unsern Tauff auch mit Wasser- Tropffnen besprengt.”

¹⁴ Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Clavis scripturae sacrae*, pars 2 (Leipzig, 1695), 606: “Doctrina de Velamine Mosis, multum lucis toti Legi adferret; si aliquanto plenius exponeretur [...]. Velamem Mosis, est quaedam obscuritas Legis, ut ejus primarius, verus, ac genuinus sensus aut scopus, non plene aut perspicue perspici possit [...]. Deinde, Mosaicae ceremoniae valde celabant in se verum nucleus, in intimis latebris involutum [...]. Detraxit igitur, in novo Testamento, Christus, hujus Populi Rex & Dominus, velamen

the historicity of the event in the eyes of the early modern faithful. Especially after the publication of Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*,¹⁵ theologians and exegetes felt increasingly pressured to prove not only that the event had actually taken place, but that the description in the Bible was completely credible and accurate.¹⁶ This was, for a number of reasons, a challenging undertaking.

Mosis, in judiciali aut Politice Lege [...]." On the subject of Flacius's biblical criticism see, for instance, Jure Zovko, "Die Bibelinterpretation bei Flacius (1520–1575) und ihre Bedeutung für die moderne Hermeneutik," in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 132 (2007), 1169–80. More generally, see Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissance-Forschung 20 (Wiesbaden, 2002).

¹⁵ Spinoza had disputed the existence of miracles: "[...] nothing happens in nature that contradicts its universal laws [...]]; the only thing that we can understand by a miracle in Holy Scripture is, as I have said, a phenomenon of nature that surpasses human understanding [...]]; everything narrated in Scripture actually happened naturally, and yet it is all ascribed to God, since it is [...] the intention of the Bible [...] to speak of things that commonly occupy people's imaginations, and to do so in a manner and style calculated to inspire wonder about things and thus impress devotion upon the minds of the common people [...]]; if we find certain things in the Bible for which we cannot attribute a cause [...] we should be fully persuaded that whatever happened, happened naturally. This is also confirmed by the fact that some of the details of miracles are sometimes omitted in the telling [...]]; these details of such miracles, however, plainly show that they involve natural causes [...]. If anything is found which can be demonstrated conclusively to contradict the laws of nature or which could not possibly follow from them, we must accept in every case that it was interpolated into the Bible by blasphemous persons. For whatever is contrary to nature, is contrary to reason, and what is contrary to reason, is absurd, and accordingly to be rejected." See Benedict de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. Jonathan Israel and trans. Michael Silverthorne (New York, 2007), 83–90.

¹⁶ See, for example, Johann Ludwig Stumpf, *Seu de divisione Rubri Maris miraculosa* (Giessen, undated), 4: "Equidem Benedicti Spinozae maledicta impietas tam manifesta a ea in parte est, ut caeteris quorum nunc animo observatur memoria non debeat accenseri, quando tractat. *Theol. Pol.* p.69.70 omnia existimat quae in Scriptura S. vere narratur contigisse, ea secundum leges naturae & omnia necessario contigisse, imo si quid reperiatur, quod apodicte demonstrari possit legibus naturae repugnare aut ex iis consequi non potuisse, plane credendum id a sacrilegis hominibus SS. literis adjectum esse. Plane sacrilegi! alibi providentiam nihil esse re vera praeter Naturae Ordinem: Miraculi nomen in sacris nonnisi respective ad hominum opinionem intelligi posse, nihil aliud significare quam opus, cuius causam naturalem exemplo alterius rei solitae explicare possumus. Haec utique spinosi hominis portenta non mirabitur, qui norit Deum & Naturam unum idemque prorsus fuisse Atheo."

According to the biblical text, the Israelites originally settle in the land of Goshen [גְּשֵׁן].¹⁷ They leave Egypt from a place called Rameses [רָמֶסֶס],¹⁸ but do not take the direct route [וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲלָהִים],¹⁹ which would have led them toward the land of the Philistines [וְאֶנְחָם אֱלֹהִים דָּרְךָ אֶרְץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים] but travel through the wilderness toward the Red Sea [דָּרְךָ הַמִּדְבָּר יִם-סוֹף]²⁰ and encamp first at Succoth [וַיִּשְׁעַט מִסְבָּת]²¹ then at Etham [וַיַּחַנֵּן בְּאַתָּם].²² In order to mislead the pursuing Egyptians, God commands Moses to turn back and set up camp “in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon” [וַיַּחַנֵּן פִּי הַחִירָה בֵּין מֶגְדָּול וּבֵין הַיּוֹם לְפָנֵי בָּעֵל צְפֹן].²³ When the pharaoh’s army seems to have sealed the Israelites’ fate and their defeat appears inevitable, God powerfully intervenes on behalf of his chosen people. A strong east wind [בְּרוּחַ קָדִים]²⁴ clears a path, through which the Israelites cross over to the other side. The returning waters swallow the entire Egyptian army, and the Israelites, after praising God for their salvation, continue their journey through the wilderness of Etham [בְּמִזְבֵּחַ אַתָּם],²⁵ where further challenges await them. While the crossing of the Israelites and the drowning of the Egyptians is a matter of just a few hours, early modern scholars estimated that the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the banks of the Red/Reed Sea took about three days.²⁶

Establishing the historical veracity of this narrative, however, posed many problems to early modern scholars and theologians alike. Not surprisingly, historical geography becomes a key component in this undertaking.²⁷ Johann Christoph Harenberg (1696–1771),²⁸ theologian and geographer from

¹⁷ See, for example, Ex. 9:26.

¹⁸ Ex. 12:37.

¹⁹ Ex. 13:18.

²⁰ Ex. 13:17.

²¹ Ex. 13:20.

²² Ex. 13:20.

²³ Ex. 14:2.

²⁴ Ex. 14:21.

²⁵ See Num. 33:8.

²⁶ See, for example, Johann Christoph Harenberg, *Beweisgründe über die Lagen und Ortsbestimmungen seiner Landkarte vom Heil. Lande*, in *Kosmographische Nachrichten und Sammlungen auf das Jahr 1748* (Nuremberg, 1750), 190: “In drey Tagen, seit des Auszugs, kamen die Israeliten bis zum Meere, durch welches sie giengen.”

²⁷ On the subject of the “geographia sacra,” see Zur Shalev, *Sacred Words and Worlds: Geography, Religion, and Scholarship, 1550–1700* (Leiden, 2012), as well as Alessandro Scafì, *Mapping Paradise: A History of Heaven on Earth* (Chicago, 2006).

²⁸ See Uwe Ohainski, “Harenberg, Johann Christoph,” in Horst-Rüdiger Jarck et al., eds., *Braunschweigisches Biographisches Lexikon: 8. bis 18. Jahrhundert* (Braunschweig, 2006), 300–301.

Braunschweig, spent considerable time trying to locate places of revelation history. Undoubtedly he viewed his scholarly study of sacred geography and chronology as a defense of the Bible against “skeptics and mockers” when he pointed out that “it was an issue of utmost importance to describe the geography of the holy books of the Bible as clearly and accurately as possible.”²⁹ But whereas modern biblical scholars occasionally leave their desks, exchanging their pencils, or laptops, for measuring tape, trowel, and shovel, the savants of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could observe and imagine potential locations of salvation history only from afar. To be sure, there had always been some adventurous young noblemen³⁰ and floods of pilgrims over the course of time who were braving the heat and hazards of the Levant to visit the sites of salvation history and to provide narratives for those left at home.³¹ For the most part, however, biblical scholarship until the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was conducted by armchair archaeologists, whose discoveries were not buried under desert sand but in the pages of the mighty tomes of their libraries.

Up to the time of Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815),³² scholars such as Edward Pococke 1604–1691,³³ who had actually traveled to Palestine to search, examine, and study the actual sites of revelation history, remained an exception.³⁴ Instead, the sages of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries had

29 “Die Zweifler und Spötter pflegen die Geschichte zu verrufen, wenn sie dagegen einen erheblichen Einwurf aus der Chronologie oder Geographie machen können. Es ist demnach anizt eine höchstnöthige Sache, daß die Geographie der Bücher der heiligen Schrift so deutlich und fest erörtert werde, als es immer geschehen kann. Dieser Umstand hat mich veranlasset, daß ich zuweilen einige müssige Stunden auf die Chronologie und Geographie der heiligen Schrift gewendet habe.” See Johann Christoph Harenberg, *Beweisgründe*, 185.

30 See, for example, Christoph Fürer von Haimendorf, *Itinerarium Aegypti, Arabiae, Palæstinae, Syriae, Aliarumque Regionum Orientalium* (Nuremberg, 1620).

31 On the subject of pilgrimage and travel, see F. Thomas Noonan, *The Road to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Age of Discovery* (Philadelphia, 2007).

32 Carsten Niebuhr, *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen and Hamburg, 1774–1837).

33 On Pococke, see, for example, Peter Holt, “An Oxford Arabist: Edward Pococke,” in Pococke, *Studies in the History of the Near East* (London, 1973), 1–26.

34 On the subject of “Oriental” scholarship, see Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents* (New York, 2006); also Michael Carhart, *The Science of Culture in Enlightenment Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), 27–68; Haim Goren, “Zieht hin und erforscht das Land”: *Die deutsche Palästinaforschung im 19. Jahrhundert*, trans. from the Hebrew by Antje Clara Naujoks (Tel Aviv, 2003); also Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven, 2002), 69–79. On the broader repercussions

to rely on their philological skills to interpret and verify the biblical account. But, as the complexity of the narrative may already suggest, this was not a simple matter. It might have been difficult for the fleeing Israelites not to lose their way in the “uncultivated, barren, and dry regions” of the Levant and Arabian Peninsula, “that have become wretched by drought and devastated by the burning heat of the sun and provide nourishment neither to humans nor vegetation.”³⁵ Similarly, it was no easy task for biblical scholars thousands of years later to identify the correct route of God’s chosen people.

The starting point for early modern exegetes was almost always a philological examination of the Greek and Hebrew sources available to them. If digging in the sand and visiting the places of revelation history in person were not always possible, then philology was a powerful tool with which to explore Near Eastern territory and dispel what in the eyes of these scholars were grave misconceptions. Such misconceptions, however, did not always stem from their early modern contemporaries. In fact, the divergence in opinions among ancient authors on issues of toponomy posed a challenge to early modern sages. Strabo, for example, had speculated that the “Red” or “Erythrean Sea” may have derived its name from the reflection of sunlight from the adjacent mountains onto its waters, but it could also have come from a spring of reddish water that emptied into the sea, as Ctesias of Cnidus had suggested.³⁶ Pliny, for his part, had suggested that the term might also be derived from the name of a king called Erythras.³⁷

None of these explanations seemed to completely satisfy early modern savants, such as the English theologian Nicholas Fuller (1557–1623)³⁸ or the

of German Orientalism, see Suzanne L. Marchand’s *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (New York, 2009), 1–52.

35 Salomon Deyling, “De Angelo Domini, Israelitarum per vastas Arabiae Solitudines Ductore,” in Deyling, *Observationum sacrarum miscellanearum pars IV.* (Leipzig, 1747), 743: “Eijusmodi enim regiones incultae, steriles, siccitate squalidae, & solis ardore exustae, nec hominem alunt, nec frugem.”

36 Strabo, *Geog.* 16.4: “Ερυθρὰν γάρ λέγειν τινάς τὴν θάλατταν ἀπὸ τῆς χροιάς τῆς ἐμφαινομένης κατ’ ἀνάκλασιν, εἴτε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡλίου κατὰ κορυφὴν ὅντος εἴτε ἀπὸ τῶν ὄρων ἐρυθραινομένων ἐκ τῆς ἀποκαύσεως ἀμφοτέρως γάρ εἰκάζειν. Κτησίαν δὲ τὸν Κνίδιον πηγὴν ἴστορεῖν ἐκδιδούσαν εἰς τὴν θάλατταν ἐρευθές καὶ μιλτῶδες ὕδωρ.”

37 Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 6.28: “Incrumpit deinde et in hac parte geminum mare in terras, quod Rubrum dixerit nostril, Graeci Erythrum a rege Erythra aut, ut alii, solis repercussu talem redid existimantes colorem, alii ab harena terraque, alii tali aquae ipsius natura.”

38 On Fuller, see G. Lloyd Jones, “Fuller, Nicholas,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 21 (2004), 154–55.

aforementioned extremely talented Arabist from Utrecht, Adriaan Reland.³⁹ It is not entirely surprising that several of them turned to the Greek Ἐρυθρὴ θάλασσα without even referring to the יְהוּדָה of the Hebrew text, since they considered the Greek and the Latin texts as the oldest and thus the most reliable versions of the Sacred Bible, as Nicholas Fuller suggested.⁴⁰ The latter devoted a lengthy portion of his much celebrated *Miscellaneorum sacrorum libri tres* (1616) to the “various causes why the Erythrean or Red Sea was called as such.”⁴¹ According to Fuller, the term “Erythras” or “Erythrus” was a reference to Esau, the elder son of Isaac, “a strong and excellent individual with a distinguished lineage,”⁴² who, as the Bible in Genesis 25:30 records,⁴³ often also went by the name “Edom.” מִדָּן, however, is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek Πυρρός or Ἐρυθρός, which means *Ruber* in Latin.⁴⁴ This led Fuller to suggest that the term must come from the Hebrew *הַמִּדָּן*, which, according to him, does not simply mean “earth” or “land,” but technically *terra rubra*, “red land.”⁴⁵ The name *mare rubrum* was, according to Fuller, not at all corrupted or incorrectly translated.⁴⁶ Naturally, the waters of the Red Sea did not have a

39 Adriaan Reland, *Dissertatio de Mari Rubro sive Erythraeo*, in *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum*, ed. Blasius Ugolinus, vol. 7 (Venice, 1747), 447–94.

40 Nicholas Fuller, *Miscellaneorum sacrorum libri tres*, in *Critici sacri: sive annotata doctissimorum virorum in vetus ac Novum Testamentum*, t. viii, pars 2 (Amsterdam, 1697), 1069: “Quid igitur fiet antiquissimis S. Bibliorum versionibus, Graecae & Latinae?”

41 Ibid., 1058: “De variis causis cur Mare Erythraeum sive Rubrum ita sit dictum [...].”

42 Ibid., 1060: “Viro huic, quantum ad hoc speculum, summa aderant omnia: robustus animus & bellicosus, egregia generic claritas, eximia corporis forma planeque [...] region principatu digna, εἴδος, ἀξιον τυρπαννίδος [...].”

43 Gen. 25:30: “Esau said to Jacob, ‘Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished! (Therefore he was called Edom.)’”

44 Fuller, *Miscellaneorum sacrorum*, 1059–60: “Erythras sive Erythrus planissime is est quem nomine quidem Sacrae literae *Esauum* appellant, cognomina autem *Edomum*, Isaaci filium grandiore, Jacobi vero fratrem. Est enim מִדָּן Graece Πυρρός; sive Ἐρυθρός, Latine *Ruber*, 2. Reg. 3.22. Isa. 63.2. Hujus coloris specie Historia Sacra ad hoc ipsum nomen *Edom* venuste alludens [...].”

45 Ibid., 1060: “Ex hoc fonte vox *הַמִּדָּן* derivata putatur, quae ex recondita notionis vis significet, non *terram* simpliciter, sed *terram rubram*.”

46 Ibid., 1071: “Dicit aliquis, Veruntamen non rubet mare illud natura. Quasi scilicet ignorarint Lxx ili doctissimi sapientissimique viri rem tam in promptu, tam in proximo positam. Nihilo feciis cum saepenumero Ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν *mare rubrum* usurparint, non toties falsum aut scripserunt aut probarunt, sed indubitatam Sacrae Geographiae Historiaeque fidem secuti versionem suam elaborarunt. Non ita falso appellarunt sed appellatione more possessivo (ut creberime usu venit) a nomine principalī *Edom*, quod est Ἐρυθρός vel *Ruber*, derivata, mare quoque *Edom*, i. Ἐρυθρὸν vel *Rubrum*, & vere & vulgo dici noverunt, quod τοῦ Ἐρυθροῦ *Rubri* esset, sive ad τὸν Ἐρυθρὸν ad *Rubrum* illum spectaret.

reddish color, but the *rubrum* was simply a possessive quality, referring to Esau. Accordingly, the entire region surrounding the Red Sea must have been part of Esau's dominion.⁴⁷

Several Hebraists, such as Paul Fagius (1504–1549),⁴⁸ thought that the term “Red Sea” was simply wrong. In his Exodus commentary, Fagius, a student of the distinguished Hebraist and reformer Conrad Pellican (1478–1556), lamented that both “Septuagint and Vulgate translated the term ים-סוף everywhere as *mare rubrum* [Red Sea], although the term סוף in fact signified not *rubrum* [red] but *carex* [rush; reed-grass] or *papyrum* [papyrus].” Fagius based his conclusion largely on the elucidations of the Jewish scholar Rashi, who had suggested that the ים-סוף was a reference to אגם שגדלים בו קנים [a wetland where a lot of reeds are found].⁴⁹

But what exactly was the Red or Reed Sea and where was it located? This question occupied the minds of numerous theologians of the period and prompted the biblical scholar from Göttingen, Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791),⁵⁰ to include it in his catalogue of questions that he forwarded to Niebuhr and his colleagues so that they could search for possible answers during their

Itaque vocabula Ἐρυθρὸς & *Ruber* in hoc loquendi genere propria sunt non appellativa, κτητικῶς non φυσικῶς adhibita, possessionis non naturae respectu intelligenda.”

⁴⁷ Ibid., 106: “Porro Edomus iste, quia totius regionis seu provinciae Dominus ac Princeps evasit, imperio item maris eandem regionem praeterfluentis simul potitum esse consuetaneum appetet.”

⁴⁸ On Fagius, see, for example, Richard Raubenheimer, *Paul Fagius aus Bergzabern: sein Leben und Wirken als Reformator und Gelehrter* (Roxheim, 1957).

⁴⁹ See Fagius in *Critici sacri*, t. i, pars 1, 259: “Hunc locum annotare libuit propter vocem Hebraicam ים סוף, quam Lxx. & Vulg. Interpres. ubique *mare rubrum* interpretantur, cum tamen סוף Hebrews non *rubrum* sed *caricem* seu *papyrum* sonat. Hinc Hebrei ים סוף *mare caricosum* vel *papyrosum* appellari dicunt, eo quod ad ejus litora copiosissima sint carecta sive papyriones [...]. R. quoque Salomo hoc idem sentit, סוף הוא לשון אגם שגדלים בו קנים.”

⁵⁰ On Michaelis, see Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Study* (New York, 2010), although the episode is basically completely neglected. A much better treatment of the episode is found in Jonathan Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity*, 69–79, although it has all the ingredients for a much more comprehensive study; also Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, 2005), 186–91; most recently, see Jonathan Hess, “Carsten Niebuhr, Johann David Michaelis, and the Politics of Orientalist Scholarship in Late Eighteenth-Century Germany,” in *World Views and Local Encounters in Early Scientific Expeditions: New Perspectives on Carsten Niebuhr and the ‘Arabian Expedition’*, ed. Ib Friis and Jørgen Bæk Simonen (Copenhagen, 2013), 78–84. I am most grateful to Jonathan Hess for making this article available to me before it appeared in print.

sojourn in the Holy Land.⁵¹ Naturally, place names mentioned in the biblical account, such as Rameses [רָמֶסֶס], Etham [אֶתְمָה], Succoth [סֻכּוֹת], Migdol [מִגְדָּול], Pi-hahiroth [פֵּי הַחִירָה], and Baal-zephon [בָּעֵל צְפֹן], served as important pointers, although not all exegetes were determined enough to convert them into exact geographical coordinates. Difficulty arose especially where profane authors were virtually silent, as was the case with the term Baal-zephon [בָּעֵל צְפֹן].⁵² This called for the input of skilled Hebraists, who were intimately familiar with the work of the rabbis. The results, however, were often mixed and their practical value questionable. One of them was Christopher Cartwright (1602–1658), an extremely able Hebraist from York, whose work was justifiably included in the Protestant *Critici sacri*.⁵³ Cartwright derived the name of Baal-zephon from the enchantments of Egyptian Magi. The term צְפֹן, Cartwright suggested, probably comes from the Hebrew term צָפָה, which means “to look out” or “to spy.” According to Cartwright, Baal-zephon derived its name from an Egyptian idol that was buried in the sand, watching over fleeing Egyptian slaves and, if necessary, holding them back before they could cross the border.⁵⁴ This would perfectly align with the term Pi-hahiroth, since, as Cartwright suggested, the term חִירָה meant “freedom,” undoubtedly a reference to the Israelites’ escape into freedom.⁵⁵ More practical information came from the Benedictine scholar Dom Augustin Calmet (1672–1757) in a small treatise on the subject, which was part of his massive *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l’Ancien et du Nouveau Testament* (1707–16) (Fig. 13). To Calmet it was

⁵¹ Michaelis writes: “Was ist das סופּ, davon das rothe Meer den Nahmen hat? wie auch dasjenige, so im Nil wächset? Von diesem, meiner Meinung nach gedeppelten Suph, wird eine genaue botanische Beschreibung und Abzeichnung, wie auch eine Nachricht von der Farbe des im rothen Meer befindlichen Suph verlanget [...]”; see Johann David Michaelis, *Fragen an eine Gesellschaft Gelehrter Männer, die auf Befehl Ihro Majestät des Königes von Dänemark nach Arabien reisen* (Frankfurt, 1762).

⁵² Augustin Calmet, “Dissertatio de Transfretatione Erythraei Per Hebraeos,” in *Commentarius literalis in omnes libros Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, vol. 1 (Luca, 1730), 368: “Belesphon sola Moysis relatione nota Urbs, nihil habet sive in Scriptura, sive apud Authores profanos, quo de ejus situ quidquam innotescat.”

⁵³ See Nicolas Keene, “*Critici Sacri*: Biblical Scholarship and *Criticism* in England, c. 1650–1710” (Ph.D. diss., Royal Holloway University of London, 2004).

⁵⁴ See Cartwright, in *Critici sacri*, t. i, pars i, 293: “Et quoniam צְפֹן Zephon deductum videtur, a נָהָר Zapha speculari, ideo Hebreai (uti etiam Fagius testatur) tradunt Baal Zephon idolum fuisse, arte magorum Aegyptiorum comparatum, atque in isto loco collocatum, ut servos ex Aegypto fugientes observaret, ac retineret. Hujus igitur idoli virtute Israelitas illic retentos credidisse Aegyptios.”

⁵⁵ Ibid., 293: “חִירָה Hiruth Hebraeis libertatem significat; R. Sal. igitur ait locum hunc sic dictum, quod Israëlitae nunc liberi facti essent [...]”

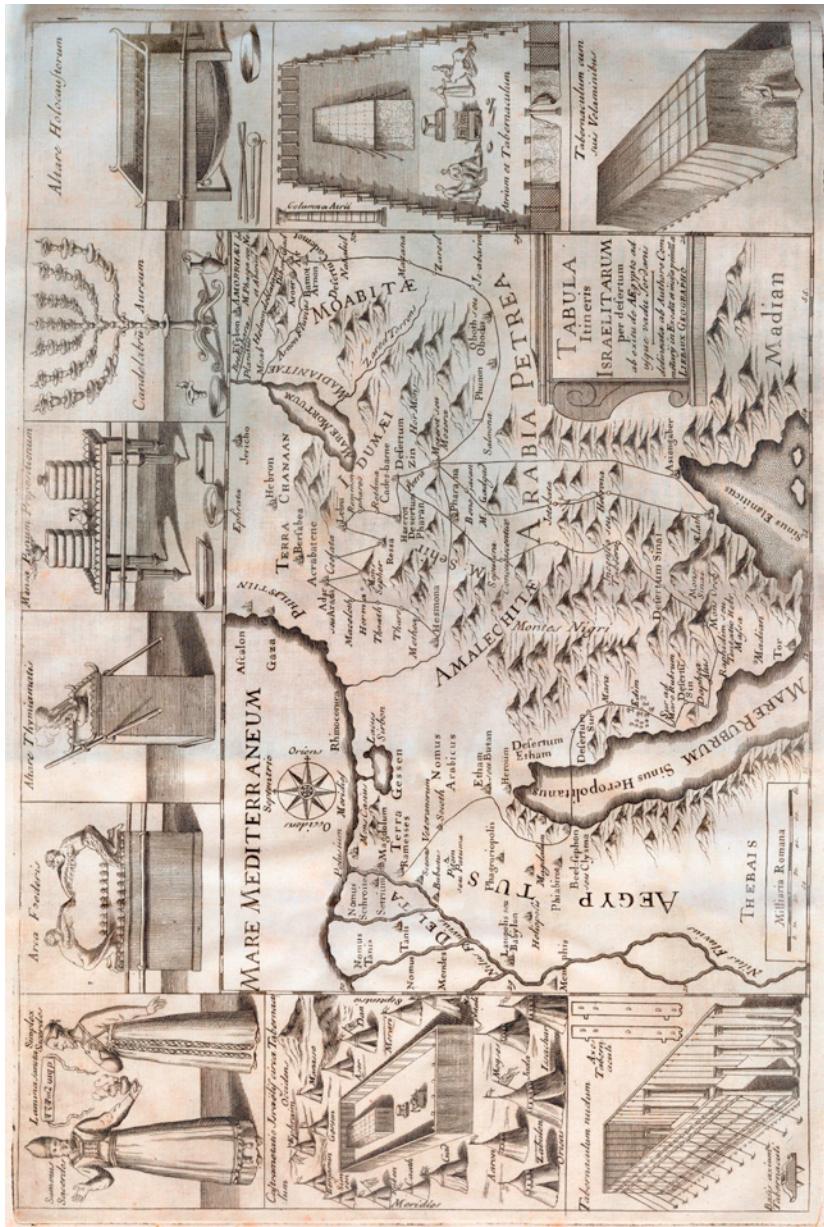


FIGURE 13 Map illustrating the Israelites' crossing of the Re(e)d Sea, according to Dom Augustin Calmet (1672-1757). See Augustin Calmet, 'Dissertatio de Transfertatione Egythri Per Hebreos' in Commentarius literalis in omnes libros Veteri et Novi Testamenti, vol. 1 (Luca, 1730).

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clear that the Israelites moved from Rameses, the city they probably built during their servitude, to Lower Egypt. According to Calmet, the name of their first stop, Succoth, could be derived from the Hebrew root סוכּה [booth, hut], which must refer to a temporary kind of enclosure with booths for cattle. The Romans called these kinds of shelter *scenae*, which prompted Calmet to suggest that Succoth may not have been far from the ancient *Scenae Veteranorum*.⁵⁶ To make sense of the name of the Israelites' camp "Etham," Calmet has to muster all his powers of erudition. The Septuagint uses two different terms to mark this part of the journey, namely "Οθώμ [Othom] by the wilderness"⁵⁷ and Βουθάν [Buthan], "which was part of the wilderness."⁵⁸ Calmet then concludes that "Ethan," as he spells it, must have been the last Egyptian city before crossing the border into Arabia. It would also fit nicely with the description by Herodotus of a city called Βούτω [Buto], which the ancient historian situates not far from Arabia.⁵⁹ This would mean that *Etham seu Butan* must have been on the edge of the desert, toward the Gulf of Suez.⁶⁰ Calmet points out that, according to Pliny, the Arabs call this part of the Red Sea *Aias*, the Greeks *Sinus Heroopoliticus* after the city *Heroum*, situated close to its banks.⁶¹ This part of the Red Sea appeared to be the most plausible part for a potential crossing, because, as Jean Le Clerc observed,⁶² the sea must have been very narrow to make a crossing even possible. Relying on the testimony of Strabo, Le Clerc suggests that at the point of the Israelites' passage, namely at the northernmost tip of the *Sinus Arabicus*, the sea was no wider than two Roman miles, around 1.6 miles, and it was thus

56 Augustin Calmet, "Dissertatio de Transfretatione," 367: "Ramesses Urbs est Israëlitatum [sic] laboribus sive condita, vel saltem novis accessionibus aucta: eo autem omnes Hebraeorum copiae ante secessionem ex Aegypto reductae sunt [...]. E Ramesse moventes Hebraei, regia via ex Aegypto inferiori ad Sinai deducente in *Socothen* venerunt. Porro nomen illud *Socothen* Hebraice sonat *tentoria*; quare non longe constitutum locum censemus ab urbe *Scenae Veteranorum* apud Geographos."

57 Ex. 13:20 [LXX]: "[...] ἐστρατοπέδευσαν ἐν Ὁθώμ παρὰ τὴν ἔρημον."

58 Num. 33:6 [LXX]: "[...] παρενέβαλον εἰς Βουθάν, ὃ ἔστι μέρος τι τῆς ἔρημου."

59 Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.75: "Ἐστι δὲ χῶρος τῆς Ἀραβίης κατὰ Βουτοῦν πόλιν [...]."

60 Calmet, "Dissertatio de Transfretatione," 367: "Socothen relicta, Etham ascenderunt *in extremis finibus solitudinis* in extrema scilicet ora deserti, Arabiam Petraeam, & Aegyptum interiacentis, quam sane vastissimam esse solitudinem Geographi omnes convenient. Hanc Urbem ipsissimam esse *Buthum* Herodoti nullus dubito."

61 Calmet, *Commentarius literalis in omnes libros Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, 444: "Quo innui videtur, Ethan postremam Aegypti urbem esse constituendam, Arabiam versus; desertum vero ad extremam oram maris rubri, nomen suum ex illa eadem urbe repetere. Apud Arabes, teste Plinio, *Aeant* est Sinus ille maris rubri a Graecis dictus *Heroopoliticus*, cui Urbs *Heroum* adjacet. Profecto *Aeant* ipsissimam esse *Ethan*, vix dubito."

62 On Jean Le Clerc and a more extensive discussion of the subject, see chapter 3 above.

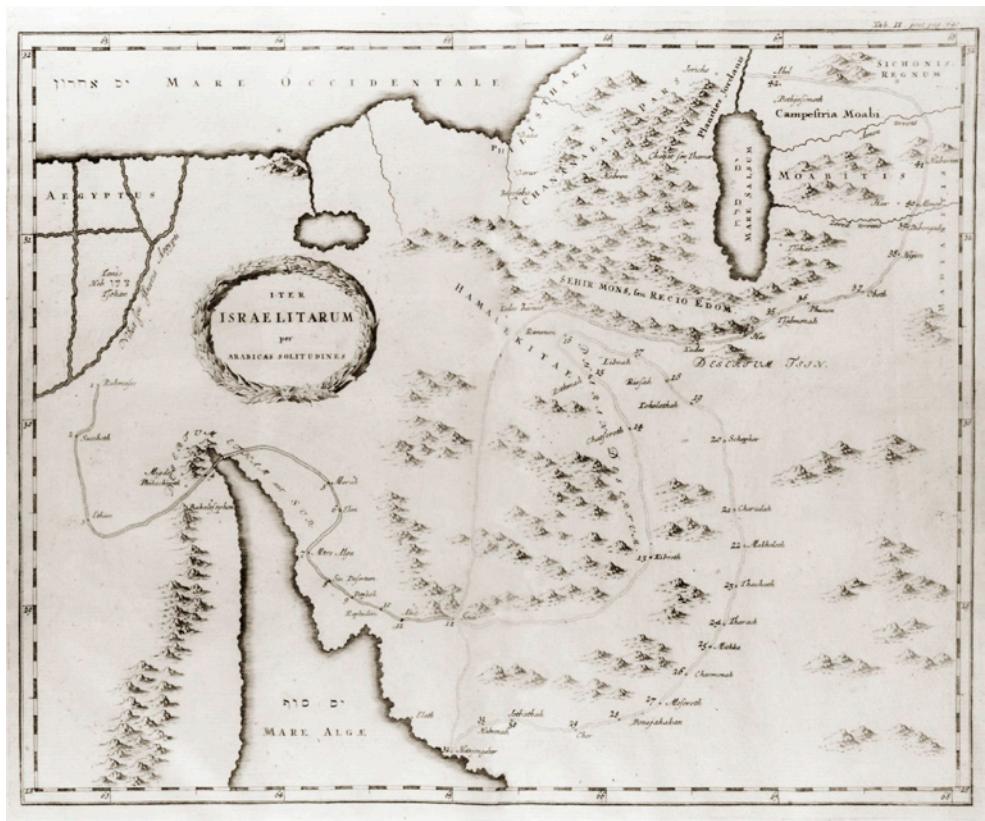


FIGURE 14 Map illustrating the Israelites' crossing of the Re(e)d Sea, according to Jean Le Clerc (1657–1736). From Jean Le Clerc, *Dissertatio de Maris Idumaei trajectione*, in Joannis Clerici Commentarius in Mosis Prophetae Libros Quinque (Tübingen, 1733).

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no major obstacle even for such a myriad of people to cross within just a few hours (Fig. 14).⁶³ Such conjectures were often the only alternative when all attempts at toponomy failed or offered a number of solutions. According to Calmet, the term Pi-hahiroth [פִי הַחִירָת] could be interpreted in several different ways. However, since this part of the sea must have been in the vicinity

63 Jean Le Clerc, *Dissertatio de Maris Idumaei trajectione*, in Joannis Clerici Commentarius in Mosis Prophetae Libros Quinque (Tübingen, 1733), 614–15: “Primum est eum sinum qua desinit, arctissimum esse, ut omnes testantur, qui de eo egerunt; quod aliquot testimonii firmare, cum res sit hoc in loco maximi momenti, supervacaneum non erit. Strabo Lib. II. p. 69. Ed. Gen. Ἀράβιος κόλπος ποταμοῦ δίκαιη στενός ἐστι καὶ μακρός [...]. Haec circiter duobus milliaribus a se invicem distant.” See chapter 3 above.

of the city of Heroum, Pi-hahiroth must have been located close to the *Sinus Arabicus* as well, since this was thought to be the only possible place where the Israelites could have crossed.⁶⁴

Many scholars, however, felt somewhat hard-pressed about the idea that the Israelites could have completed their journey from Egypt to the banks of the Red Sea in just three days and they were thus looking for plausible alternatives;⁶⁵ their classical sources often provided help. In his *Apologie*, Reimarus had emphasized that “all ancient authors, just like the Jews, considered the Red Sea as the one which the Israelites crossed.”⁶⁶ This, however, is not entirely true. Reland pointed out that many ancient authors defined the Red Sea not only in narrow terms as the *Sinus Arabicus* but also in much broader terms. Herodotus, for example, divided all of the world’s ocean waters into three parts, namely the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the Red Sea, which he still separated from the Caspian Sea, and, even more drastically, Aristophanes had identified the Red Sea as the body of water surrounding the entire globe. Plutarch, by contrast, suggested that the gulf areas that are created by the ocean’s erosion of landmass are “the Mediterranean, the Caspian Sea, and then τοὺς περὶ τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν θάλατταν, namely all those bays that are in the area of the Red Sea, namely the Gulf of Arabia, Persia, and the Mouths of the Ganges which are all created when this large body of seawater hits the landmass.”⁶⁷

64 Calmet, “Dissertatio de Transfretatione,” 367: “*Phihahirot*, sive tantum *Hirot*, ut in Libro Numerorum, & apud Eusebium, & S. Hieronymum appellatur, situm habet variis diversorum conjecturis incertum. In Commentario nostro sententiam quorundam adduximus, qui confundendam censem cum urbe Heroum, ad extremam oram sinus Arabici, apud veteres Geographos notissima [...]. Ex pluribus autem Intinerariis [sic] constat, an extrama maris ora usque ad eum locum nullam patere viam exercitui deducendo, ut proinde Israelitae facile eo loci mare tranasse credendi sint.”

65 See Harenberg, *Beweisgründe*, 190: “In drey Tagen, seit des Auszugs, kamen die Israeliten bis zum Meere, durch welches sie giengen. Wie? Läßt sich dieser Umstand auch einigermassen auf den arabischen Meerbusen ziehen? Zwischen Heracleopolis und dem Meerbusen hätten sie leicht drey Wochen zugebracht.”

66 See Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 315: “[...] daß alle alte Profan-Scribenten, so wie die Juden selbst, das rothe Meer für dasjenige gehalten haben, wodurch die Israeliten gekommen seyn sollten [...]”

67 Reland, *Dissertatio de Mari Rubro*, 443–444: “Pari modo Aristophanes conjungit imperium maris rubri cum imperio totius telluris [...]. Herodotus lib. 1. *circa finem*, universum Oceanum praecipue in has tres partes dividit, *Mediterraneum*, *Atlanticum & Rubrum*, & hoc omne idem esse mare affirmat, contra ac *Caspium* quod cum alio non commiscetur [...]. Ita & Plutarchus, sinus, quibus Oceanus in terras irrumpit, descripturus in lib. *de facie in orbe Luna*e, unum ait esse *mare Mediterraneum* alterum sinum *Caspium* quem ex Oceano ducere originem credebant, & dein τούτους περὶ τὰν [sic] ἔρυθραν θαλαττανα, illos

The Hebrew text could provide completely different leads. If, for example, the root סַפֵּס is read as סְפִּס and not as סַפָּס, then this would furnish סְפִּס not with a physical quality, but a geographical one. The Red or Reed Sea would then be converted into הַתְּהִלָּאָסָסָה הַאֲסָחָתָה or a *mare posterius vel postremum* [farthest or lowest sea],⁶⁸ which could also be interpreted as a reference to the Mediterranean Sea,⁶⁹ because it borders Egypt to the North.

Such broad and loose definitions obviously provided early modern scholars with some level of flexibility when they were contemplating the exact route the fleeing Israelites had taken out of Egypt. Nevertheless, not all of them were willing to settle for the geographical Red Sea as the body of water in question. To Johann Matthias Hase (1684–1742),⁷⁰ professor of mathematics at the University of Wittenberg, for example, the Bible itself provided the essential clue for a correct identification of the sea in question. Hase pointed out that in Numbers 33:7 the biblical text states that the Israelites “turned back to Pi-hahiroth [פֵּי חַיְרָת] after they had left Etham.”⁷¹ This means that the crossing must have occurred further north than many had generally assumed. For Hase, a potential candidate of the biblical Red Sea is Lake Sirbonis, located close to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Basing his hypothesis on the work of the eccentric philologist from Helmstedt, Hermann van der Hardt (1660–1746),⁷² Hase suggested that the Greek σιρβωνίς must simply be just a grecized form of the Hebrew סְפִּס. According to Hase, it was fairly common in Greek to interpolate an additional letter for phonetic reasons, as was the case in Sesostris

sinus, qui sunt circa mare rubrum, i.e., sinum Arabicum, Persicum, Cangeticum, & c. qui ex magno illo mari, terras ingresso, formantur.”

- 68 Fuller, *Miscellaneorum sacrorum*, 1069: “Tertius locus est I Reg. 9.26. illic enim הַתְּהִלָּאָסָסָה הַאֲסָחָתָה [sic] transferetur, quasi סְפִּס Soph pro סַפָּס Souph legerit Interpres, aut certe legendum putarit; & tanquam perinde valeat יְמִים אַחֲרֵין סְפִּיס atque הַיּוֹם, i. הַתְּהִלָּאָסָסָה הַאֲסָחָתָה, *mare posterius vel postremum*.”
- 69 Ibid., 1070: “siquidem הַתְּהִלָּאָסָסָה הַאֲסָחָתָה *Mare extremum*, h.e. in extremitate positum, utriusque ex aequo convenit, tam mari Mediterraneo quam rubro: quippe duabis hisce extremitatibus (quod quidem ad Orum & Occasum attinet) terram Israeliticam inclusit Dominus Exod. 23.31.”
- 70 On Hase, see Fritz Schnelbögl, “Hase, Johann Matthias,” in *NDB* 8 (1969), 21–22.
- 71 Johann Matthias Hase, *Regni Davidici et Salomonae Descriptio Geographica et Historica una cum Delineatione Syriae et Aegypti [...]* (Nuremberg, 1739), 198–99: “Phi Hachiroth, fauces Chirotharum reddunt, & Junio placent plane fauces montium. Enimvero vocem Phi ostium, vel exitum, aut fauces etiam canalium vel fretorum norare posse, nemo non videt. Sane inde sunt conjecturae nostrae superius allatae de Phibeseth & Phacusa.”
- 72 On Hermann van der Hardt, see chapter 2, note 35.

and Sesosis, Bactra and Balch, or Tartar and Tatar.⁷³ But support for Hase's theory of Lake Sirbonis came also from elsewhere. In his *Bibliotheca historica*, the ancient historian Diodorus Siculus pointed out that Lake Sirbonis "brings upon those who approach it in ignorance of unexpected dangers."⁷⁴ Since the lake is surrounded by sandy dunes and the wind constantly blows sand over it, the surface of the lake becomes indistinguishable from solid land. According to Diodorus, this had led to the drowning of numerous people. The mixing of sand, water, and soil has turned the consistency of the lake into a marshy and slimy mass, which makes an escape for those who have been trapped virtually impossible.⁷⁵ Naturally, as Hase's analysis implies, this could also have happened to the pharaoh and his army when they were pursuing the Israelites.

Still, what certainly perplexed some early modern scholars was that Moses and his flock set up camp at Etham, but ended up in the wilderness of Etham again after the crossing had already taken place. Also, how could the Israelites have witnessed the dead bodies of the Egyptians lying on the shore, as it is stated in the Bible,⁷⁶ if they had already successfully crossed over to the other side?⁷⁷ This led Grotius, for example, to suggest that the route of the crossing

73 Hase, *Regni Davidici descriptio*, 203: "Nam cum [Hardtius] a Graeco σιρβωνίς Suph petat, ex sua hypothesi scilicet nimis ab omni verisimilitudine abhorrenti, quod omnia promiscu vocabula Hebraea ex Graecia ortum suum repetant. Nobis contra videtur ex Hebraeo Suph a Graecis factum esse Surph, Sirbo, Sirbonis, interposita litera r. Cujus generis interpositionum a Graecis pro rotunditateoris sui, affectata maximam partem, exempla numero plurima occurunt: Sesostris pro Sesosis, Sethosis, Bactra pro Balch, Tigris pro Degilat, Hiddekel, nec apud nostros inusitata sunt, qui Carton pro Coton, Spalatro pro Aspalathum, Tartar pro Tatar & c. dicunt."

74 Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 1.30.4: "[...] προσαγορεύεται μὲν Σερβωνίς, τοῖς δ' ἀπέροις τῶν προσπέλαζόντων ἀνελπίστους ἐπιφέρει κινδύνους."

75 Ibid. 1.30.5–9: "στενοῦ γάρ τοῦ ρεύματος ὄντος καὶ τανίᾳ παρασλησίου, θινῶν τε μεγάων πάντη περικεχυμένων, ἐπειδὴν νότοι συνεχεῖς πνεύσωσιν ἐπισείεται πλήθος ἄμμου. αὕτη δὲ τὸ μὲν ὕδωρ κατὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν ἀσημον ποιεῖ, τὸ δὲ τῆς λίμνης τύπον συμψή τῇ χέρσῳ καὶ κατὰ πᾶν ἀδιάγνωστον. διὸ καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀγνοούντων τὴν ίδιότητα τοῦ τόπου μετὰ στρατευμάτων ὅλων ἡφανίσθησαν τῆς ὑποκειμένης ὁδοῦ διαμαρτόντες [...]. ὁ γάρ ὑπὸ τοῦ τέλματος καταπινόμενος οὕτε νήκεσθαι δύναται, παραιρουμένης τῆς ιλώος τὴν τοῦ σώματος κίνησιν [...]."

76 Ex. 14:30: "Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea."

77 See, for example, Johannes Osiander, *Commentarii in Pentateuchum pars secunda. Sive commentarius in Exodum* [...] (Tübingen, 1677), 138: "Ratio eorum est, Primo, quod non videantur tam paucis horis Israelitae potuisse in oppositam ripam pertingere. Secundo, quod Israelitae post Maris rubri transitum viderint Aegyptiorum cadavera in littore; solet autem mare cadavera ejicere ad littus propinquius [...]."

must have been something remotely similar to a semicircle.⁷⁸ Grotius, however, was only reiterating what others had already proposed decades earlier. The aforementioned Paul Fagius, for example, pointed out that

the Jews have brought forth arguments from which they conclude that the sons of Israel did not cross into the innermost part of the sea, but, after having entered it only to a certain point in a semicircle, they returned to the same shore.⁷⁹

As the passage might already indicate, Fagius was referring to the works of Jewish sages such as Ibn Ezra's Exodus commentary or Hezekiah ben Manoah's commentary on the Pentateuch.⁸⁰

Such questions and the broad sources early modern scholars adduced to tackle and solve them provide only a glimpse of the demands biblical scholarship required. Looking at Reimarus's radical work and the sources that were available to him, it becomes clear that he was aware of such debates and took them into account when he was confronting the biblical text. Although Lessing's published excerpt, for the most part, leaves out Reimarus's discussion of toponomy, the finished version of his *Apologie* proves that he did engage with the problem of historical geography. There, Reimarus not only mocks the desperate attempt of Jean Le Clerc to help the Israelites across the Red Sea,⁸¹ but, as an able philologist and Hebraist, he also evaluates classical sources and utilizes them to his advantage.

Reimarus, like many sages of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, uses the meaning of the Hebrew text as his starting point. Most likely, he observes, the term סוף סוף derived its name from the reed, shrubs, and weed that grew in abundance in that particular body of water, as Bochart,⁸² for example, had

⁷⁸ See Grotius's remarks on Ex. 15:22 in his *Annotationes ad Vetus Testamentum* [1644], in *Hugonis Grotii Opera Omnia* (London, 1679), t. 1, 32: "Per medium sicci maris] Semicirculo in mari facto: non a littore ad littus oppositum."

⁷⁹ Fagius in *Critici sacri*, t. i, pars. i, 279: "Habent quoque Hebraei & alia argumenta quibus colligunt filios Israël non penitus trajecisse mare, sed tantum aliquousque per modum semicirculi ingressos, rediisse ad idem littus."

⁸⁰ Ibid., 279: "R. Hizkuni super hunc locum scribit לא שעברו בתק' הים ר' חיילון אמר שאנן הים מכטיק בין ארץ מצרים ובין ארץ כנען אלא לא היה צריך שנכנסו בה רק כדי שנכנס פרעה אחריהם ויטבע מן הים."

⁸¹ See chapter 3 above, note 289.

⁸² Zur Shalev, *Sacred Words and Worlds*, 141–202.

noted in his *Geographia sacra*.⁸³ Bochart, in return, had based his conclusion on a passage in the work of the ancient grammarian Hesychius, who had qualified as *Polymnia* a sea “ἡ πολὺ φυκίον ἔχουσα” [that contains much seaweed].⁸⁴ Alternatively, the name Suph could also be a reference to a city or town in the vicinity of the sea, such as Heroum, probably modern-day Suez, as Reimarus suggests. Since, however, Strabo had recorded that the distance between the ancient city of Pelusium and the Isthmus of Suez was around a three to four days' journey, the trip of the Israelites from Rameses to Pi-hahiroth must have taken much longer.⁸⁵ Therefore, Reimarus concludes, several scholars have acknowledged the impossibility of the crossing of the geographical Red Sea and have thus looked for alternative explanations:

Recently, some have recognized the impossibility of the crossing of the Red Sea and so they have proposed, alternatively, *Lacum Sirbonis*, which is separated from the Mediterranean Sea by a small stretch of land and whose opening (*Ekregma*) to the Mediterranean is in the West. Accordingly, [these scholars] believe that the Israelites, whose gathering place was not far from the royal residence of Zoan or Tanis at Ramses, which is the city *Heracleotis parva*, crossed the *Ekregma* or the lake's opening to the Mediterranean Sea to the small stretch of land and only then turned toward the Arabian Desert.⁸⁶

83 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 314: “Es ist also dasselbige Meer, was bey Mose und in den Psalmen Jam Suph genannt wird [...]. Unterdessen ist doch auch wahr, und von vielen erwiesen, daß an diesem Meere und auf dessen Boden viel Schilf und Grünigkeit wächst.”

84 Bochart writes: “Hinc obiter collige, cur Mare Rubrum seu Sinum Arabicum Hebraei נָסַר מִם, id est, mare algosum, appellant: nempe ab algae copia, cuius aggeres ad littora coacervati praebent accolis aedium usum. Graece πολυμύλαν dixeris. Hesychius; Πολυμύλα, ἡ θάλασσα ἡ πολὺ φυκίον ἔχουσα; *Polymnia, mare, quod multam algam habet.*” See Samuel Bochart, *Geographia Sacra, seu Phaleg et Canaan* [...] (Leiden, 1692), 283.

85 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 316: “Wir mögen und demnach winden und drehen wie wir wollen, so müssen wir doch an den Durchgang durchs Rothe Meer. Strabo giebt den Abstand des Isthmi zwischen Pelusium und dem rothen Meer an von 3 bis 4 Tagereisen. Das träfe noch ziemlich mit dem Zuge der Israeliten, von Raemses bis gen Suchot, von Suchot bis gen Etham, von Etham bis gen Pihachirot, überein; aber der Zug eines gantzen Volks mit vielem Vieh und Packwagen müste doch viel länger als drey Tagereisen bis an die Zunge des Rothen Meeres gedauret haben.”

86 Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 312–13: “Denn es sind in neueren Zeiten einige gewesen, welche die Unmöglichkeit des Durchgangs durchs rohte Meer wohl eingesehen, und statt dessen den Lacum Sirbonis angegeben haben, welcher von dem Mittelländischen Meere nur durch eine schmale Erdzunge abgesondert war, und seinen Ausbruch (*Ecregma*) in das Mittelländische Meer am westlichen Ende hatte. Sie meynen demnach, die Israeliten,

Explicitly citing Hermann van der Hardt, Johann Matthias Hase, and Christoph Harenberg, Reimarus points out that the scenario these scholars suggested could under no circumstances have occurred. If the Israelites had taken this alternative route, they would not only have risked a confrontation with the powerful and belligerent Philistines but they would also have become victims of the lake's treacherous accumulation of sand. To bolster his argument, Reimarus not only adduces the already-mentioned description of Lake Sirbonis by Diodorus Siculus,⁸⁷ but he also utilizes Strabo,⁸⁸ who had provided what must have seemed to Reimarus a fairly accurate description of this stretch of land to the north, between the Philistine city of Gaza in the East and Lake Sirbonis to the West.⁸⁹

But even the full printed version of the *Apologie* provides only hints at the role philology and classical sources played in Reimarus's attack on the Bible and how meticulously he had dissected the entire episode. More substantial evidence can be found among the Reimarus papers in the archives in Hamburg.

welche ihre Versammlung nicht weit von der königlichen Residentz Zoan oder Tanis zu Raemses, d.i. in der Stadt Heracleotis parva gehabt, wären über das Ecregma, oder den Durchbruch des Sirbonischen Sees ins Mittelländische Meer zu dem schmalen Landstrich übergegangen, und hätten sich hernach erst zu der arabischen Wüste gewandt."

⁸⁷ See note 74 above; Reimarus, *Apologie*, 315: "Dagegen Diodorus an einem andern Orte den Sirbonischen See nicht allein als entsetzlich tief, sondern auch die Gegend umher, als eine sumpfige Wüste beschreibt, welche nur obenhin mit etwas Sand bedeckt sey, so daß wer sich einmal dadurch verleiten lassen hinein zu gehen, nohtwendig darin versinken müste [...]. Die Israeliten hätten so wenig als Pharao, mit ihren vielen Wagen, in die Tiefe des Grundes über das Ecregma hinunter, und die Israeliten an das gegenseitige steile Ufer wieder hinan fahren können: und wenn diese denn doch am Ende des schmalen Erdstrichs hätten wieder vor den Philistern umkehren wollen, so würden sie in die sumpfige Wüste an der mittägigen Seite des Sirbonischen Sees, d.i. nach Diodori Beschreibung, in die Barathra gerahten und sämtlich versunken seyn."

⁸⁸ Strabo, *Geog.* 16.2.32: "Καὶ αὐτὴ μέν οὖν ἡ ἀπό Γάζης λυπρά πάσα καὶ ἀμμώδης· ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον τοιαύτη ἡ ἐφεξῆς ὑπερκει- μένη, ἔχουσα τὴν Σιρβωνίδα λίμνην παράλληλον πας τῇ θαλάττῃ μικρὸν διόδον ἀπολείπουσαν μεταξὺ μέχρι τοῦ ἐκρήγματος καλουμένου, μῆκος ὅσον διακοσίων σταδίων, πλάτος δὲ τὸ μέγιστον πεντήκοντα· τὸ δ' ἔκρηγμα συγκέχωσται. εἶτα συνεχῆς ἄλλη τοιαύτη ἡ ἐπὶ τῷ Κάσιον, κάκεΐθεν ἐπὶ τῷ Πηγλούσιον."

⁸⁹ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 313: "Daraus ist sonnenklar, daß der Geschichtschreiber durch das Schilfmeer oder Jam Suph nicht den Lacum Sirbonis gemeint habe. Denn der Durchgang über dessen Ausbruch ins Mittelländische Meer würde sie gerades Weges auf den schmalen Landstrich, welcher auf die äusserste Stadt der Philister, Gaza, zugeht, gebracht haben. So führt uns Strabo rückwerts von Gaza, über den schmalen Landstrich, bis an das Ecregma oder den Ausbruch des Sirbonischen Sees. Folglich wandte sich das Volk von diesem Wege, und zugleich vom Lacus Sirbonis weg."

Among them are a few loose sheets with notes from an eclectic range of sources. They have been lumped together under the title *Auszüge aus der Literatur und wissenschaftliche Notizen* [Excerpts from Literature and Scholarly Notes] (Fig. 15).⁹⁰ One of these unnumbered sheets contains the Hebrew term סֻוִת, followed by a number of bibliographic citations. The works listed include Olof Celsius's *Hierobotanicon* (1745–47), Henry Justel's *Recueil de divers voyages faits en Afrique et en l'Amérique* (1674), and Paul Ernst Jablonski's *Pantheon Aegyptiorum* (1750). The page numbers that Reimarus had noted down all lead to passages that deal with the vegetation of the Red Sea region in general and the meaning of סֻוִת in particular. The segment Reimarus had selected from Jablonski, for example, discusses the various Egyptian deities and cults associated with the Nile. From the pages of Jablonski, the reader learns that the Ethiopians called the Nile *Siris*, which eventually was also adopted by the Egyptians, most likely due to commercial relations with the former. However, Jablonski notes, Theophrastus in his *Historia plantarum* reported that the Egyptians knew a particular kind of rush, which grew in the water and which they called *Sari*. Since this *Sari* grew in abundance in the Red Sea region, the Copts called it *Mare Sari*. From this Jablonski concludes that the Hebrew סֻוִת is just another term for *Sari*, from which the name סֻוִת originated.⁹¹

Most likely—this is at least what their content suggests—these sheets are part of the larger project of Reimarus's radical work. They provide important clues about how Reimarus orchestrated his meticulous attack against revelation. The published edition of the *Apologie* conveys the impression that Reimarus divided his work into two parts, one part about the Old Testament, the other part about the New Testament. Although this is true for the most

90 STA HH, 622–1 Reimarus, A 7, "Auszüge aus der Literatur und wissenschaftliche Notizen."

91 Paul Ernst Jablonski, *Pantheon Aegyptorum sive de diis eorum commentarius* (Frankfurt, 1750), lib. vi, 150–51: "Quandoquidem asserui, ex testimonio veterum omnium, nomen *Siris*, *Nilo* impositum, ex Aethiopum lingua arcessendum esse, dubius mecum ancepsque haereo, ausimne illius originationem lectori ex lingua Aegyptiorum petitam offerre [...]. Venit igitur mihi aliquando in mentem, posse nomen hoc derivari a voce *Sari*, quae in Aegyptiorum dialecto reperitur, et cuius etiam antiqui meminerunt. Est autem aliqua *iunci* species, olim in Aegypto sic nominata. De ea THEOPHRASTUS, histor. Plantar. Lib. iv. capp. ix. ubi *Papyrus*, idque, *quod vocant SARI*, coniungit. De *Sari* vero sigillatim, ibidem haec addit: *SARI in aqua provenit, circa paludes, inque campis, quos Nilus recedens dereliquit [...]*. Ab eadem Copti Sitium maris Arabici, quem vulgo *mare rubrum* vocant, dixerunt [...] *Mare Sari*, id est *iunceum*, quemadmodum Hebraei, ab Aegyptiis edocti, mare idem simili nomine סֻוִת, *mare iunceum* appellant. Nam mare magna *iunci*, sive *Sareos* copia abundat. Quemadmodum vero mare illud, a *iunco*, et apud Aegyptios, et apud Hebraeos, nomen traxisse certum est [...]."

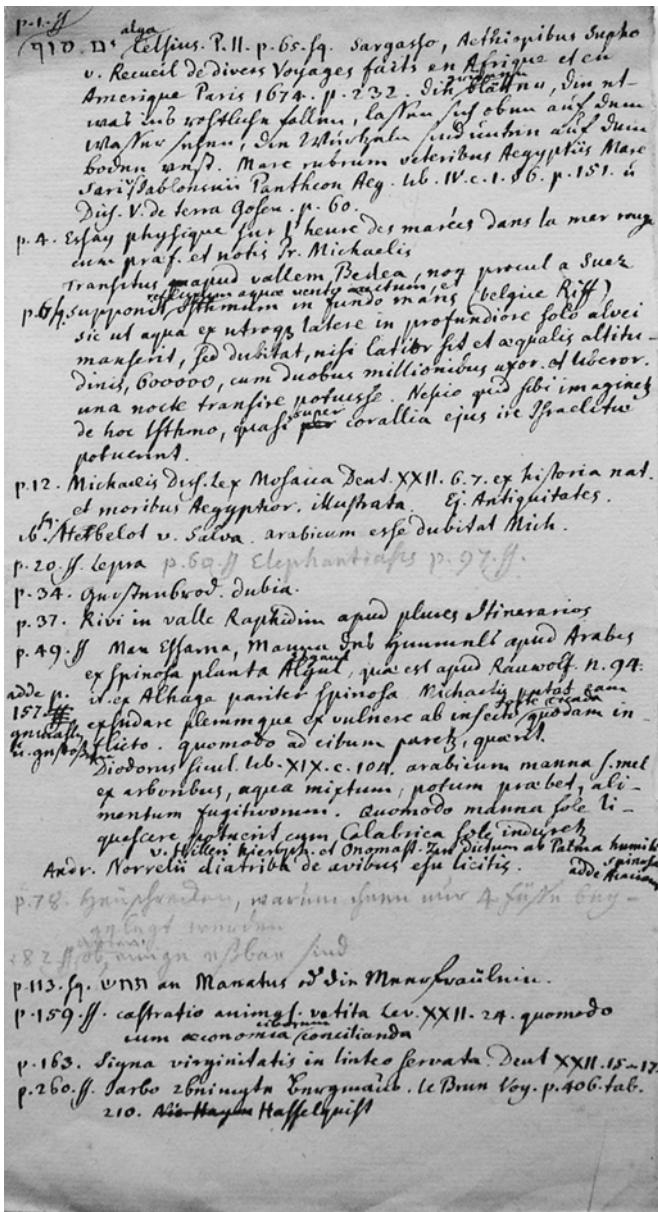


FIGURE 15 Notes from the he Reimarus papers, discussing the **¶10-¶1**
 [Re(e)d Sea].

STA HH, 622-1 REIMARUS, A 7, "AUSZÜGE AUS DER LITERATUR
 UND WISSENSCHAFTLICHE NOTIZEN." COURTESY OF
 STAATSARCHIV HAMBURG.

part, it does not fully capture Reimarus's approach. It seems, in fact, very plausible that Reimarus also had a certain spectrum of subtopics in mind, which were key components of each biblical episode. Reimarus must have considered these topics essential for understanding a certain passage or event. He broke down episodes into manageable parts. One could almost call these portions "clippings." He examined each one of these parts individually, and then, after completing his "dissection," zoomed out again to evaluate the entire biblical event based on his findings. Obviously, his final judgment is almost always the same: the episode as recorded in the Bible is implausible and anything based on it—Christian doctrine, for the most part—worthless. This process then involves different stages: breaking down an episode into smaller parts, accumulating a bibliography for each part, and then evaluating each part based on the information available. With regard to the Exodus episode, the topics Reimarus must have had in mind were the multitude of the people who were involved but also the meaning of the נָסָר מַיִם, its nature and location.⁹² The notes that I have discussed earlier are then part of this bibliography, which, in almost every case, would include many classical and rabbinic sources, and travel accounts, as well as scientific and philosophical works. This information then is worked into the *Apologie*, where it becomes submerged into the text and virtually invisible to the reader.⁹³

Unfortunately, this tremendous amount of learning also remained invisible to both Lessing and his opponents during the Fragment Controversy. Under these circumstances, however, it still seems quite telling that Lessing remarked that, although "these objections were nothing new, they had never been made so meticulously, thoroughly, with all possible refutations already in mind."⁹⁴ Hardly any of the respondents, however, seemed to grasp the meticulousness the fragmentist had utilized when he dismantled the Exodus episode. In fact, some of them, such as Johann Heinrich Daniel Moldenhawer

⁹² Another group of bibliographical resources, for example, focuses on the "manna." It includes references to Diodorus Siculus, Johann David Michaelis, and Matthäus Hiller's *Onomasticum sacrum* (1706), which underlines the importance philology played for Reimarus.

⁹³ Martin Mulsow has made a similar observation in his "From Antiquarianism to Bible Criticism? Young Reimarus visits the Netherlands," in *Between Philology and Radical Enlightenment: Hermann Samuel Reimarus*, ed. Martin Mulsow (New York, 2011), 14.

⁹⁴ Lessing, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8: *Werke 1774–1778* (Frankfurt, 1994), "Gegensätze des Herausgebers," 324: "Der Einwurf des dritten Fragments ist schon oft gemacht, und oft beantwortet worden. Aber wie ist er beides? Sicherlich ist er noch nie so gründlich, so ausführlich, allen Ausflüchten so vorbeugend gemacht worden, als hier."

(1709–1790), even faulted him for having read his sources uncritically or for not having understood them properly.⁹⁵ Most of the respondents focused entirely on the problem of a multitude of people crossing within a short period of time, without even touching upon the larger philological questions involved. One of the few exceptions was a treatise by Gottlob Heinrich Richter (1718–1796), a fairly unknown and insignificant science teacher from Grimma, who more or less conceded that the crossing could not have happened at the geographical Red Sea, thereby making much of Reimarus's argument his own.⁹⁶ His investigation led Richter to conclude that the body of water in question must have been Lake Sirbonis. According to Richter, the term **רָאֵס מִם** referred not only to the lake's abundant vegetation but also to its geographical location. As several savants from earlier periods had noted, the **רָאֵס** could also be interpreted as *Soph*, “end.” Richter points out that this was most likely a reference to the location of *Lake Sirbonis* on the edge of Egyptian territory.

It would be wrong to dismiss such debates as relics from a time when biblical archaeology had not yet emerged and the deciphering of hieroglyphics and the development of Comparative Semitics still lay in the future. In the past few decades, a number of publications by reputable biblical scholars have appeared that still ask fairly similar questions as the sages from those days long gone by. In fact, the question of the veracity of the Exodus tradition has produced a large body of scholarship in the field of biblical archaeology in the context of the debates between minimalists and maximalists.⁹⁷ The most

95 Johann Heinrich Daniel Moldenhawer, *Prüfung des dritten Fragments aus der Wolfenbüttelschen Bibliothek von dem Durchgange der Israeliten durch das rothe Meer* (Hamburg, 1779), 19, note 50: “Ob sich gleich der Verfaßer das Ansehen eines großen Weltweisen giebet, so hat er doch bey den Zeugnissen, die er anführt, und bey den Folgen, welche er aus denselben ziehet, alles philosophische Nachdenken bey Seite gesetzt.”

96 Gottlob Heinrich Richter, *Geographische Untersuchung ob das Meer durch welches die Israeliten bey ihrem Auszug aus Aegypten gegangen der arabische Meerbusen gewesen sey?* (Leipzig, 1778), 39: “Es bleibt nichs übrig, als daß das im Text angeführte **רָאֵס מִם**, dem Moses gegen über seine Stellung genommen hatte, ein Meer von einer ganz andern Lage gewesen seyn müsste. [...] [S]ey es genug gezeiget zu haben, daß unter dem im Hebräischen so genannten **רָאֵס** [...] der arabische Meerbusen nicht gemeynet seyn könne.”

97 On the minimalist perspective see, for instance, Thomas L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* (London, 1999); Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Its Sacred Texts* (New York, 2002), 48–71. For a good synthesis of these debates, see Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (New York, 2011), especially 23–35.

comprehensive recent analysis of the Exodus geography stems properly from James K. Hoffmeier, who has argued that the crossing probably occurred to the north of the Gulf of Suez, in the area of the Ballah Lakes.⁹⁸ Although finds by Egyptologists have yielded sources inaccessible and unknown to Reimarus and his contemporaries, many of the questions raised are still similar, if not the same. Only rarely, however, do modern biblical scholars pay heed to the arguments of their famous early modern predecessors. A noteworthy exception may be Niels Peter Lemche of the Copenhagen School, who explicitly pays homage to Reimarus's analysis of the Exodus story.⁹⁹ Recently, the distinguished Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen pointed out that he had come across what he termed a "dramatic alternative" interpretation of the term ים סוף, which suggested that a correct translation would not be "Red/Reed Sea," but "sea of the End."¹⁰⁰ Obviously, Kitchen was unaware that answers not only await discovery under Egyptian sand but are also buried in the writings of early modern sages.

98 An advocate of the maximalist position is James K. Hoffmeier. See his *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (New York, 2005), 47–109.

99 Niels Peter Lemche, *The Old Testament between Theology and History: A Critical Survey* (London, 2008), 128; Lester L. Grabbe also acknowledges Reimarus's contribution, in his "Additum Praeputium Praeputio Magnus Acervus Erit: If the Exodus and Conquest had Really Happened," *Biblical Interpretation* 8 (2000), 23–32.

100 Another strong supporter of the maximalist position is Kenneth A. Kitchen. See his *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, 2003), 262.

Afterthoughts

When Reimarus died on 1 March 1768, he could not foresee what would happen to his secret work and how posterity would view him. He had witnessed the fate of Johann Lorenz Schmidt, the author of the Wertheim Bible, who had been forced on an odyssey through Germany until he found protection and a safe haven in Wolfenbüttel.¹ Not much more appealing was the fate of the radical Johann Christian Edelmann, whose openly Spinozist position made him a *persona non grata* in many parts of Germany.² Schmidt and Edelman were living in open conflict with the religious establishment of the day, whereas Reimarus chose to remain silent. His choice was similar to that of the French freethinker Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749), secretary of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris, who did not witness the publication of his notorious *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe* (London, 1768) during his lifetime, or the French parish priest Jean Meslier (1664–1729),³ whose attack on church and state was not published until more than thirty years after his death.⁴ Too much was at stake for Reimarus: he was part of the Hamburg establishment; he possessed sufficient resources to maintain a large household, accumulate a large library, and provide for the education of his children. During his lifetime, his radical work remained accessible only to a small circle of close confidants. But even here, he needed to be careful about whom he could tell. When Reimarus, for instance, opened his house to provide assistance to Johann Lorenz Schmidt, it seems very likely, as Martin Mulsow had speculated, that he refrained from openly confessing his sympathies for Schmidt's heterodox ideas. He would have made himself vulnerable to potential blackmail from Schmidt, who had much less to lose at this point.⁵

Although Lessing published excerpts from his work and a violent reaction from the theological establishment followed, one can only speculate about the reactions if the entire work had been published. However, the complexity

¹ Paul Spalding, *Seize the Book, Jail the Author: Johann Lorenz Schmidt and Censorship in Eighteenth-century Germany* (West Lafayette, Ind., 1998), 202–9.

² Anneliese Schnaper, *Ein langer Abschied vom Christentum. Johann Christian Edelmann (1698–1767) und die deutsche Frühaufklärung* (Marburg, 1996); also Walter Grossmann, *Johann Christian Edelmann: From Orthodoxy to Enlightenment* (Paris, 1977).

³ See Jean Meslier, *Testament: Memoir of the Thoughts and Sentiments of Jean Meslier*, trans. Michael Shreve (New York, 2009).

⁴ Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (New York, 2004), 384–86.

⁵ Martin Mulsow, *Prekäres Wissen: eine andere Ideengeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2012), 49–51.

of his work and the depth of his attack on revelation depended, on the one hand, on his profound training in philology and classical scholarship and, on the other hand, on his continued access to a tremendous body of scholarship, which was guaranteed by his silence.

Personally, Reimarus seemed fairly antagonistic to open confrontations. As we have seen, in his letter to Querini he expressed disdain for theological disputes, and in the *Apologie* he seems quite horrified by the idea of preaching his gospel to the masses.⁶ In fact, as he himself points out, the *Apologie* grew out of a personal motivation to come to terms with his inner religious struggles and was initially not intended for publication.⁷

His personal doubts, as he claims, led him to examine Scripture and Christian doctrine rationally. According to Reimarus, reason is God-given and distinguishes human beings from animals.⁸ This means that divine revelation and its carriers need to withstand the test of reason.⁹ Hermeneutically, such an approach breaches the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. In fact, Reimarus already views the Bible as a human document that,¹⁰ in terms of a Le Clerc, can be treated just as if one is reading Aristophanes.¹¹ This does not automatically mean that the biblical protagonists and events are unreliable and incredible. It only creates the preconditions for a rational analysis of the biblical narrative and its protagonists, based on human standards.

⁶ Hermann Samuel Reimarus, *Apologie oder Schutzschrift für die vernünftigen Verehrer Gottes*, ed. Gerhard Alexander, 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1972), vol. 1, 57: “Ich bin wenigstens nicht dazu geschickt, und ich weis auch nicht ob ich einen überwiegenden Nutzen bey den Menschen stiften würde, daß ich jetzo schon das Unkraut der alten Vorurtheile mit Gewalt ausrotten wollte.”

⁷ Ibid., 41: “Diese Schriftt [...] ist schon vor vielen Jahren von mir aufgesetzt worden [...]. Bloß meine eigene Gemüths-Beruhigung war vom ersten Anfange der Bewegungsgrund, warum ich meine Gedanken niederschrieb [...]; mit meinem Willen soll sie nicht durch den Druck gemein gemacht werden, bevor sich die Zeiten mehr aufklären.”

⁸ Ibid., 54: “Ohne Vernunft und deren Gebrauch wären wir, wie das Vieh, gantz und gar keiner Religion fähig.”

⁹ Ibid., 73: “Es bleibt uns also nichts übrig, als die väterliche Religion, weil sie nach dem Zufall eben so wohl falsch seyn könnte, mit Vernunft und ohne Vorurtheil zu untersuchen [...]. Denn eine göttliche Religion, die des Menschen Verstand erleuchten und den Willen heiligen soll, fordert von ihm eine überlegte Einsicht und Überführung von ihrer Wahrheit [...].”

¹⁰ Ibid., 74: “Ihr bekommt diese Offenbarungen nicht unmittelbar von Gott selbst, sondern von Menschen, welche die Boten gehabt zu haben behaupten. Die Prüfung muß also nach den Regeln geschehen, wonach man die Wahrheit eines menschlichen Zeugnisses untersucht.”

¹¹ See chapter 3, note 12.

Such a position, however, became possible only because the legitimacy of the Bible as a divinely inspired document and its wholeness had already been severely compromised by earlier developments in textual criticism and biblical exegesis. As we have seen in the case of Morin, many of these developments were confessionally charged and often were intended to defend theological positions and to uphold scriptural authority. Although a scholar such as Cappel did not intend to question scriptural authority, his brawl with the younger Buxtorf ultimately exposed weaknesses in the *Hebraica veritas*. In this regard, the vehemence of the reaction of Buxtorf seems justified, because an attack on the authenticity of the vowel points or the *Ketib-Qere* might open the door to question key doctrinal passages as well.¹² If a scholar such as Le Clerc suggests that scriptural passages could be emended, or if Drusius and Grotius bring in a myriad of profane sources to elucidate the biblical text, a Pandora's box was opened for further incursions.

In this theologically explosive atmosphere, where scholarly credibility demanded a mastery of the three holy languages, to say the least, we encounter a prospering of biblical exegesis and scholarship that tried to comprehensively cover every aspect and detail of Scripture, mostly with the intention of emphasizing its integrity and veracity. Testimonies to this attempt are the monumental works of Samuel Bochart and Friedrich Spanheim (1632–1701), but also the myriad dissertations and books on nearly every aspect of the biblical world and sacred antiquarianism by the Buxtorfs, Adriaan Reland, Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), Jacob Rhenferd (1654–1712), Theodor Hase, Hermann Witsius, and many others, which often ended up in compilations such as Ugolini's *Thesaurus antiquitatum sacrarum* or the *Critici sacri*.¹³ Scholars such as Fabricius¹⁴ and Wolf¹⁵ belong more to the tail end of this culture, and their tremendous bibliographic enterprises are attempts to systematically record and organize this body of material.¹⁶

At the same time, however, the study of Jewish antiquities and philology had an incredibly subversive potential, which remained dormant as long as it

¹² Johann Anselm Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy: Hermeneutics and Interpretation of the Sacred Scripture in the Age of Orthodoxy," in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, vol. 2: *From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Magne Saebø (Göttingen, 2008), 749.

¹³ Nicholas Keene, "*Critici sacri*: Biblical Scholarship and Criticism in England, c. 1650–1710" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 2004).

¹⁴ Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliographia antiquaria* (Hamburg, 1713).

¹⁵ Johann Christoph Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4 vols. (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1715–33).

¹⁶ Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (New York, 2003), 40.

was used in the context of a *hermeneutica sacra*. As we have seen in chapter 2, Jewish sacrificial practices as seen through the lens of the New Testament could be interpreted as a mirror image of Christ's passion and redemption. Once they were historicized, however, they could also be viewed as the crude practices of a primitive and superstitious people. This happened once the biblical text was no longer treated with its long-maintained reverence as *verbum Dei*. The same holds true for key biblical figures, the office of the priesthood, the role of the apostles, and events such as the Exodus. Once the priests or Moses were no longer treated as divinely inspired servants in an ancient theocracy, they became corruptible human beings who were politically motivated. This is ultimately what Reimarus did. With the claims that reason was a divinely instilled gift and that revelation ultimately cannot contain anything that contradicts it, the boundaries of a *hermeneutica sacra* and a *hermeneutica profana* vanish. The biblical text becomes subject to an in-depth analysis that rests upon a profound knowledge of antiquities and philology. Reimarus thus was able to partly harvest the fruits of the labor of generations of Hebraists and philologists before him.

Such an approach, however, required philological training, excellent skills in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and access to a large corpus of works in the fields of classical antiquity and biblical studies. From his childhood on, Reimarus had been economically, intellectually, and socially privileged. His father's affiliation with the *Johanneum* guaranteed an excellent education, and it also helped build a bridge to his later mentor Fabricius, whose reputation outshone that of many scholars of his time. A mentorship with Fabricius guaranteed access to the world of learning and scholarship. We noted earlier that Reimarus scoffed at the skills of his fellow students at Jena. While young Edelmann struggled with Hebrew at Jena and never attained more than a rudimentary knowledge of Greek,¹⁷ Reimarus as a student was already fluent in Latin and Greek and highly skilled in Hebrew and Aramaic. Once Fabricius had taken the young and undoubtedly bright student under his wing, Reimarus's path to a successful academic career was opened. Reimarus's scholarly work depended much on the resources that were available to him, and his connection with Fabricius and Wolf guaranteed access to them. Both Fabricius and Wolf had amassed gigantic private libraries. When Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach visited Fabricius, he pointed out that the latter owned virtually every edition that is listed in the *Bibliotheca Graeca*.¹⁸ Similarly impressive must have been the library of Johann

¹⁷ Schnaper, *Ein langer Abschied*, 46–47.

¹⁸ Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, *Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen Holland und Engelland*, pars. 2 (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1753), 87.

Christoph Wolf. Both men were experts in the fields of classical scholarship and antiquarianism. So they must have owned virtually every standard work in the field of textual criticism and philology. Through his mentors, Reimarus had access to these tremendous resources, and his rigorous training in classical scholarship and biblical studies had endowed him with the skills to use them.

At the same time, however, Reimarus was already a precursor of the later Enlightenment. Whereas Fabricius and Wolf were firmly entrenched in the world of classical scholarship, philosophy, and Hebraism, Reimarus's interests seem much broader than theirs, especially in regard to the experimental and applied sciences. The auction catalogue of his library lists numerous works on history, law, and medicine, but also on dendrology and botany. As early as his *peregrinatio academica*, Reimarus exhibited a vivid interest in the cutting of peat and in Nicolas Hartsoeker's magnetic demonstrations. Until Reimarus's death in 1768, his household was a gathering place for a diverse body of Enlightenment figures.¹⁹ As a distinguished and well-to-do citizen of a port city that offered a window to the world, he was continuously exposed to a culture of exchange.²⁰ This scientific side of Reimarus became an important component in his radical criticism of revelation. Once he abandoned the boundaries of a *hermeneutica sacra*, Reimarus could also apply this body of knowledge in his evaluation of the credibility of the biblical narrative. This practical component almost seamlessly complements his philological and antiquarian analysis. When, for example, Reimarus points out the implausibility of the description of Noah's ark and the deluge, we see glimpses of his knowledge of geography, mathematics, mechanics, statics, topography, and zoology, and at numerous other instances in the *Apologie* he supports his analysis by detailed arithmetic demonstrations.²¹

¹⁹ See chapter 3.

²⁰ On the subject of commerce and cultures of exchange, see Harold J. Cook, *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, 2007).

²¹ Reimarus, *Apologie*, vol. 1, 207–9: “Die Naturgeschichte, die Baukunst, und die übrigen Umstände, mögten uns wohl unzehlige Widersprüche und Unmöglichkeiten bey dieser Erzählung vorhalten. Ich will nicht von der Menge des Wassers sagen, welches den ganzen Erdboden bis 15 Ellen über die höchsten Berge bedecken sollte, deren einige über 10000 bis 19000 Pariser Fuß senkrecht hoch sind. Denn was unter der Erde von Wassern verborgen seyn mag, kann wohl kein Mensch bestimmen [...]. Aber [die Tiere] sollen nun alle in diesen eine Kasten. Wie kommen sie hinein? Denn ich will ja hoffen, daß der Schreiber daran wird gedacht haben, den großen Kasten in eine Art von Prahmen oder Schiffs-Boden und Gerippe zu stellen, damit er nicht im Wasser, das so ungeheure Wellen werffen muste, umschlage, oder auch mit seiner unglaublichen Last bis auf ein Drittheil untersinke, und der unterste Stock unbrauchbar werde [...]. Allein, das quält uns noch,

Reimarus's attack on revelation, then, needs to be viewed as highly complex and multilayered. Although its debt to Wolffian rationalism, Baylian moral thought, and English deism is undoubtedly significant, his criticism is embedded in a philological and antiquarian framework. This context, however, is completely submerged in the text. Since, in the course of the Fragment Controversy and thereafter, respondents focused almost exclusively on the theological questions at stake, the scholarly foundations of Reimarus's criticism were obliterated. The present work has attempted to expose this hidden layer of scholarship. A genuinely critical edition of the *Apologie* would probably be able to reveal the full complexity of his criticism, but it would most likely encompass ten volumes or more. Given that Reimarus worked for approximately thirty years on the *Apologie*, one can only hope that modern scholarship will be quicker.

da wir sehen, daß Buteo nur für die fleischfressende Thiere mit ein Paar Tausend überzehligen Schafen gesorgt hat, da doch einige Vögel und vierfüßige Thiere sind, als der Fisch-Adler, die Fisch-Otter, u.s.w. die nichts anders als Fische fressen wollen: und hier in diesem Kasten wird wohl keine sonderliche Gelegenheit seyn zu fischen. Das ist ein wenig schlimm. Ey, laß sie denn Heu fressen; ehe sie zu Tode hungern! Gott kann ihnen schon einen andern Geschmack und Magen gegeben haben. Aber, die Biber wollen auch frisch Laub und Baumrinden, die Tamandua lauter Ameisen, andere gewisses Obst, Nüsse, Zucker-Rohr, Wurtzeln, haben. Laß sie Heu fressen!"

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